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*Comedies of Aristophanes, viz. the Clouds, Plutus, the Frogs, the Birds. Translated into English with notes.*

[From the Eclectic Review, for March, 1813.]

THERE is, perhaps, no species of composition, of which we can so easily conceive the first occasion and rude beginnings, and the minute and gradual improvements, as of comedy. Nothing appears more natural than that at some season of unrestrained hilarity, at harvest-home, or when the vintage was got in, some wicked wag, full of the "*veteris Bacchi, pinguisque ferinæ*," should undertake to amuse his companions with the oddities of a ridiculous or obnoxious individual. He would suppose him in some ludicrous situation—put on his face as well as he could—use his cant phrases and particular gestures—and, exaggerating and caricaturing the whole, he might manage to give the taste and malignity of his rude audience a very tolerable afternoon's entertainment. To support a monologue, however, would be difficult and tedious, and his memory would easily supply him with more than one fit subject of mimicry. He would probably, therefore, soon introduce two characters in dialogue, playing the two parts alternately, till some one of his companions, ambitious of his honours, should rid him of half the burden, and sustain the conversation with him. It would then become necessary to preconcert, in some measure, the story and the dialogue; and two successful *performers* would soon draw a *company* around them. They would next claim some reward for their trouble, and would wander about,

amongst villages, a kind of strolling *improvisatori*, exacting, at fairs and festivals, contributions from the lovers of drollery. They would contrive a moveable booth in which they might receive their audience in unfavourable weather. By a natural division of labour, the dialogue would soon be provided for the performers "by another hand," and the poet and the player would become distinct personages. The taste of the auditory would in time become more fastidious, and dresses must be used appropriate to the characters. Rude scenery, too, would begin to be introduced; and these would gradually improve as the fables of the poet, still employed about particular and well known persons, grew more attractive, and drew more forcibly the attention and liberality of the public.

The strolling company would, from a consideration of interest, manage to be at any particular place at the time when the pomp and pageantries of Pagan worship had attracted thither a great concourse of people—as they do in fact, among ourselves, follow in the rear of the fairs. Thus the festivities of the theatre would connect themselves with the solemnities of religion, and hence we may account for the introduction of the chorus, who, in the infancy of the drama, interrupted the action of the piece with hymns in honour of the gods. When regular theatres were established, this connexion was necessarily dissolved, and the chorus then took a wider range.

It appears certain that in the time of Aristophanes, (who, all our readers know, was the chief of the old school of comedy,) great magnificence and dexterity must have been attained in the scenery and machinery of the stage. We do not argue from the expense and management requisite for the *adequate* representation of some of his comedies, as, for instance, of the *Clouds*, where the introduction of the chorus, and the conflagration of the school, would require considerable ingenuity; or of the *Birds*, of which the winged "dramatis personæ" would occasion inexperienced *dress makers* much perplexity; or of the *Frogs*, in which the passage of Styx is a matter of even greater difficulty;—because we know the poet is used to make the greatest demands upon the good nature and imagination of the audience, when the wardrobe and machinery of the theatre the least entitles him to do so. When our stage had scarcely sufficient decorations to distinguish a country house from a banqueting room, Shakspeare introduced his *Tempest*, with a dialogue on board a ship, in a storm at sea, and Beaumont and Fletcher had occasion for a sea fight. But it is upon record, that the Athenians lavished great sums upon the drama; that Æschylus frightened preg-



nant women into miscarriage by his Chorus of Furies, and that, in consequence thereof, a decree of the state diminished the number of the chorus from fifty (an army of players not often poured, we imagine, even on the stage of Covent Garden) to fifteen. Of all the advantages which spectacle could give him, Aristophanes, probably, found it necessary to make use, as he was supporting the old comedy against the rival writers of the *middle* school, and as his partisans, therefore, must have been chiefly among the populace, who may be supposed most likely to be taken with the tricks and finery of the play-house.

We say that the partisans of the old comedy must have been principally among the populace: for the personality and scurrility of its satire was such, as we can scarcely conceive to have been tolerated among persons of any high degree of civilization. Not only was the greatest possible freedom taken with the names of notorious individuals, but the very persons were introduced upon the stage, and masks devised, that copied and caricatured their countenances. Thus Socrates is the hero of the "Clouds;" the "Knights" was written against Cleon, who had been imprudent enough to hint at the expediency of restraining the petulance of Aristophanes's muse. Euripides is one of the *dramatis personæ* in several plays. Æschylus, Demosthenes, Nicias, and others, all play their parts in turn. Of the personality of the dialogue the reader may take a few specimens. "Si quis erat dignus describi," says Horace, "*multa cum libertate notabant.*" On the first entrance of the Chorus of Clouds, Strepsiades asks,

"If these be clouds, (d'you mark me?) very clouds,  
How came they metamorphos'd into women?"

*Socr.* This it is in short:

Hast thou ne'er seen a cloud which thou could'st fancy  
Shap'd like a centaur, leopard, wolf or bull?

*Streps.* Yea, marry, have I, and what then?

*Socr.* Why then

Clouds can assume what shapes they will, believe me;  
For instance; should they spy some hairy clown,  
Rugged, and rough, and like the unlick't cub  
Of Xenophantes, straight they turn to centaurs,  
And kick at him for vengeance.

*Streps.* Well done, Clouds!

But should they spy that peculating knave,  
Simon, that public thief, how would they treat him?

*Socr.* As wolves—in character most like his own.

*Streps.* Aye, there it is now; when they saw Cleonymus,  
That dastard runaway, they turn'd to hinds  
In honour of his cowardice.

*Socr.* And now,  
Having seen Clisthenes, to mock his lewdness  
They change themselves to women." Pp. 35—37.

In the "Frogs," Bacchus tells Hercules he is going to the shades to bring back Euripides.

*"Herc.* With what design?

*Bac.* I want a clever poet.\* We've none left:—  
Our modern ones are wretched.†

*Herc.* How? I pray,  
Is Jophon‡ dead?

*Bac.* The only good one he  
Remaining, if he's certainly a good one:—  
But that's a question I am not so clear in.

*Herc.* But if to th' shades you go to seek a poet,  
Say why not Sophocles, as he's the senior.

*Bac.* Not him by any means, unless indeed  
I could keep Jophon separate from him,  
To try what he without his sire can do.  
Besides, Euripides, a crafty fellow,  
Will do his best to get away with me;  
But Sophocles, as here, is there content.

*Herc.* Where's Agathos?

*Bac.* He's gone away from me,  
A worthy bard, the darling of his friends.

*Herc.* Poor fellow! where?

*Bac.* To th' banquet of the blest.

*Herc.* Where's Xenocles?

*Bac.* I care not;—hang the dog!

*Herc.* Pythangelus?

*Xanth.* Why talk you not of me?  
I'm sure this shoulder's bruis'd most horridly.

*Herc.* Say, are there not besides an endless tribe  
Of beardless dramatists, who prate so fast  
They beat Euripides by many a mile?

*Bac.* Aye, those young sprigs, that chatt'ring nest of  
swallows,  
Corrupters of good taste; and wondrous vain,  
If by uncommon luck they chance to get  
A single play appointed for performance.

\* *I want a clever poet.* Bacchus was supposed to be interested in the composition of tragedy, as his festivals were the principal occasions upon which tragedies were exhibited.

† ——— *We've none left:—*  
*Our modern ones are wretched.*

An application of a line out of the *Cœneus* of Euripides.

‡ *Jophon.* A tragic poet, the son of Sophocles, supposed to avail himself of his father's writings.



But wheresoe'er we seek, we ne'er can find  
A bard endow'd with powers to produce  
Some work of genuine fancy." Pp. 284—286.

It must be remembered that these were names well known to the audience; and the reader will best perceive the unlimited freedom of the Athenian stage, by supposing for a moment such notorious names substituted in the foregoing passages, as Castlereagh, Whitbread, Wellington, Wilberforce, Canning, Mrs. Clarke, or as Walter Scott, Baillie, Montgomery, Rogers. What employment for the counsellors! What discussions of the libel-law!

Nor is Aristophanes a whit more tender of his immortals. When Bacchus makes his descent, in the *Frogs*, he puts on an old lion's-skin of Hercules's. Now Hercules himself had once descended to the shades, and stolen away the "mastiff Cerberus," and the lion's-skin is recognised by Æacus, one of the judges of the dead, who thereupon threatens Bacchus with all the punishments of Tartarus, and goes out to prepare them. Bacchus, in his fright, persuades his slave Xanthias to put on the fatal dress. Then

*"Enter a Maid Servant of Proserpine.*

*M. S.* Welcome, dear Hercules! Walk in, I pray.  
Soon as the goddess heard of thy arrival,  
She straightway bak'd new bread, put on her pots  
With herbs and pulse for porridge, on the fire  
Laid a whole ox, and made most curious cheese-cakes.  
So pray walk in.

*Xanth.* Thou'rt very kind.  
Boy! follow with my things.

*Bac.* Stir at thy peril.—  
Because in sport I made thee Hercules,  
Art thou for being so in earnest? Cease  
This idle jesting, Xanthias, and again  
Hoist up thy pack and carry it.

*Xanth.* How's this?—  
Thou can'st not think of stripping me so soon  
Of thy own gift?

*Bac.* Not soon, but instantly.—  
Down with the skin.

*Xanth.* I do attest the fact;  
And to the gods commit my cause.

*Bac.* What gods?  
O foolish vanity! to hope to pass  
For Hercules, when but a slave and mortal.

*Xanth.* 'Tis well. Here take it; but ere long, please God,  
Thou may'st again perhaps be suing to me." Pp. 317, 318.

Plutus is described as (Plutus, v. 260. of the original) "a dirty, hunch-back'd wretch, all over wrinkles, with no hair on his head, nor a tooth in his gums"—and Mercury gets off no better.

Nor are the solemnities of the Pagan religion less pertinaciously devoted to ridicule. When Plutus is carried to the temple for the recovery of his eyesight, Cario the slave goes with him, and the next morning thus reports the matter to his mistress, who asks him what other invalids were present.

One Neoclides, a blind man, but such  
As can outshoot in knavery and theft  
Many with two eyes in their heads; and others  
Plenty, with sore diseases of all kinds,  
From all parts. Well, the priest put out the lamps,  
And wished us all good night, forewarning us,  
If any one should chance to hear a noise,  
He must say nothing. So we all lay down  
In order due; but I to little purpose—  
I could not sleep; a porridge-pot, which stood  
At an old woman's head, had wrought in me  
Such aspirations after it: at last  
I ventured to look up;—good heaven! the priest  
Was sweeping from the sacred table all  
The wafers, and the figs, and after that  
Visited every altar in its turn  
To see if any eatables were left.  
All these he set apart—in his own bag.  
I thought there must reside in that same act  
Some mighty virtue, so I started up  
To the porridge-pot directly.

*Mistress.* Oh you wretch!  
Had you no fears of the god?

*Cario.* Aye, marry had I,  
Lest with the advantage of his crown he might  
Get to the pot before me; the old priest  
Had taught me what to look for in that case.  
The ancient crone, listening the noise I made,  
Put out her hand. I gave a hiss, and caught it  
Between my teeth, as if I'd been a serpent.  
She drew it back into the bed at once:  
And there she lay, coil'd up in perfect silence,  
Sweating for very fear. And so I supp'd  
The porridge up, and when I'd had my fill  
Gave over.

PLUTUS, v. 665. of the original.

The Knights furnishes us with a mock oracle. Demosthenes and Nicias are contriving how to deprive Cleon (the tanner) of the ascendancy he has acquired over the populace. De-



mosthenes finds it written in an oracle that the tanner is to be succeeded by a sausage-seller, and meeting with a sausage-seller, reads him the oracle.

“ When as the tanner-bird of crooked claws,  
Shall once have seized the dragon in his jaws,  
Stupid and gorged with blood; then perish, then,  
The o’erbearing Paphlagonians, leek-fed men,  
For sausage-sellers mighty glories spring,  
Unless they stick to trade and tripe-selling.

*Sausage-Seller.* And how does this, then, point at me?

Come, tell me.

*Dem.* The tanner-bird is this Paphlagonian Cleon.

*S. S.* But then the *crooked claws*.

*Dem.* This only means,

His hands are admirably formed for filching.

*S. S.* What does the *dragon* point at?

*Dem.* This is plainest

Of all; a dragon’s long, and so is a sausage;

A dragon’s gorged with blood too, so is a sausage.”

KNIGHTS, v. 197. *of the original.*

The political and moral tendency of an unbounded freedom so unmercifully used, we are not grave enough, after rising from the farces of Aristophanes, to consider at any length. The religion, however, which could *invite* and *tolerate* such abuse of itself, its ceremonies and its gods, could not be worth defending from it. As to the benefits resulting to society from the poet’s having a lash put into his hand, wherewith to scourge corruption and immorality from the land, we think it pretty evident that, where he gave one stroke out of regard to the public good, he would give two from personal pique, and twenty to make the spectators laugh.

Leaving this question, however, the *poetical* effect of the freedom of the stage is evident enough. It tended to produce farce instead of comedy. That comedy, whose province it is to imitate life and manners, should then degenerate into farce, when it attempts the character of an existing individual, may at first sight seem a paradox. But the truth is this: If the poet looks out among the notorious personages of his day, for a subject whereupon to fasten his satire, and wherewith to make his audience laugh, he will be caught, not by those minute traits at which comedy smiles, and which he might mingle and mould into an original character, but by those bolder oddities and eccentricities which he may at once embody in farce, and by which he may safely challenge the “broad grins” and horse laughs of goodnatured spectators. Why, for instance, was Socrates chosen as the hero of a

comedy? Assuredly, not because he was a compound of comical qualities, which every one, whether he knew any thing of Socrates, or not, might be sure to recognise in some one or other of his acquaintance. No, but because the poet wanted to laugh at—probably, thought to laugh down—the petty quibblings and disingenuous sophistry of the schools. How far Socrates was justly made the vehicle of his satire is another question: he has certainly succeeded in his intention—made the schoolmen completely ridiculous—but he has not drawn a *character*. He, indeed, who wishes to draw one, will proceed after a very different fashion. Choosing the passion or habit of mind, which he purposes to hold up to ridicule—take avarice, for instance, or a pedantical attachment to any branch of learning—he will not forthwith personify it, as Moliere has the former, in his *Avare*, and Pope the latter, in his *Scriblerus*: but he will connect with it many a little trait of peculiarity, which he has treasured up, and which he now finds will assimilate well, or which, perhaps, he observes nature has generally combined, with the character under his hands. Thus we have a being presented to us, of like passions and infirmities with ourselves: we grow familiar with it, and forget, in time, that it is but a creature of the poet's fancy. Compare with Harpagon, and *Scriblerus*, the Briggs of Miss Burney, or the Walter Shandy of Sterne, and something of this will, we think, be discerned in a moment.

Nature never leaves the mind, any more than she does the face, with but one feature: and the poet who exhibits a mind as all anger, for instance, or who brings it forward in those situations only where nothing but anger is visible, is about as true to nature as the portrait painter who should sketch a face all nose. To mix up different qualities into one character—to form a white “workday” light, out of the colours of the rainbow, is the business, and it is no easy one, of the comic poet.

The ancients, even when they left off bringing particular personages on their stage, have, from whatever cause, very little of comic character. They had but few elementary ones. Terence has pretty amply enumerated them in two of his prologues. It was the business of the comedian, he says,

“ To exhibit  
 “ Slaves running to and fro, to represent  
 “ Good matrons, wanton harlots, or to show  
 “ An eating parasite, vainglorious soldier,  
 “ Suppositious children, bubbled dotards.”



Again, he mentions,

“ The running slave,

“ The eating parasite, enrag'd old man,

“ The bold-faced sharper, covetous procurer.”\*

From these elements the poet was to work when he attempted any thing of *general* character, and it is wonderful how like one another are their dramatis personæ. The running slaves are very Dromios, and the masters Antipholis's. You cannot tell them apart. We look in vain for a character wasted and worked into some whimsical shape, by perpetual tossing and tumbling in the great deep of human life and manners. The ancients were content with drawing a species; but the most exquisite comedy is that which paints the individual—the individual, with the dispositions that nature gave him, and the oddities it has collected, in sweeping through the world. Analyze Falstaff, “ unimitated, inimitable Falstaff.” A wit and a coward nature made him—and has made many others: “ evil communication” with vicious companions moulded him into a drunkard, and a debauchee, and a liar, and a thief; there is a pleasant smack of consequence about him which his knighthood gave him; and his intimacy with Hal makes him swagger with the Lord Chief Justice, and pretend to an acquaintance with Lord John of Lancaster. There is not one heterogeneous quality about the character; and yet Aristophanes might have hunted through all Athens, with the philosopher's lantern to boot, before he met with a Sir John Falstaff to make a farce upon. Where is there any thing like him in all antiquity? or like Sir Roger de Coverley—or Squire Western—or “ My Uncle Toby?”

To return, however, to Aristophanes. His own genius appears to have inclined him strongly to farce. The incidents, the dialogue, the characters of all his pieces, are those of farce rather than of comedy. In the *Frogs*, we are alarmed with the appearance of a dead man upon the stage, not for the rational and laudable purpose of being buried, but to refuse the carrying of Bacchus's bundle across the Styx. In the *Wasps*, a dog makes his appearance; he is, however, a much more modest performer than his brother in the “ Witch of Edmonton;” his whole part, if we are not mistaken, consisting in “ hau, hau.” A chorus of birds may pass, perhaps; but who but Aristophanes and the Americans, ever heard of such vocal performers as frogs?

\* Prologues to the *Eunuch* and *Self-Tormentor*.

Colman's translation.

All these absurdities, however, while they do not pretend to be natural, are rendered very laughable by Aristophanes. He has a broad humour about him, and a biting wit, that are quite irresistible; and is altogether as superior to our present-day writers of comedy, as—but there is no ratio between a finite quantity and nothing.

We are, therefore, very glad to see a beginning made towards putting him in an English dress. The present volume consists of four plays, the *Clouds*, as translated by Cumberland, and long known to the English reader; the *Plutus*, by Henry Fielding, Esq. and the Rev. Mr. Young; the *Frogs*, by Dunster; and the *Birds*, now first translated by “a member of one of the universities.” “If the plan,” says this “member of one of the universities,” “upon which the *Birds* has been executed, shall be found acceptable to the public, we shall speedily commit to the press a second volume, containing a version of the *Wasps*, the *Acharnians*, the *Peace*, and the *Knights*.” For our parts, we are inclined to think that “the plan” will not be found “acceptable to the public.” The *Birds* is rendered, with a singular want of judgment, into plain prose, as the *Plutus* had been before it—“a sort of comico prosaic style,” as the “member of one of the universities” is pleased to call it. Those who think that a familiar and colloquial blank verse, rising, as occasion may require, into poetry, or descending into the looseness of prose, is the best style for comedy in general, may have their opinion confirmed by consulting the preface of Colman to his translation of Terence. We have only time to remark here, that Aristophanes himself wrote in metre, which is, of itself, with us, a sufficient reason why his translator should do so too; and that he introduces, sometimes in banter, and sometimes in earnest, very dignified and splendid passages into his pieces, to the proper representation of which mere prose is wholly inadequate. How, for instance, would the dispute of the two tragedians in the *Frogs* have appeared in prose? Or what has prose to do with the solemn strains of the following theogony?

O mortals, heirs of darkness, feeble race;  
That flourish like the leaves a little space,  
Ye puny tribe of shadows, things of clay,  
Poor mortals, unfledged beings of a day,  
Dream-like and vain; to us awhile attend,  
To us who live for ever, know no end,  
Know no decline of age, reside in air,  
And meditate immortal musings there,  
Attend, &c.



In older times, ere earth, or heaven, or light,  
 Were Chaos, Tartarus, Erebus, and Night.  
 'Twas then, in Erebus' abysses dread,  
 That black-wing'd Night did, self-impregnated,  
 The egg produce, from which, as time ran by,  
 Love sprung all lovely, and of laughing eye,  
 Wings at his shoulders, shadowing to his feet,  
 Of golden texture, and as whirlwinds fleet.

BIRDS, v. 686. *of the original.*

Or the fluent nonsense of this pretty namby-pamby?

" Muse, that lov'st the wood and spring,  
     Tio, tio, tio, tinæ,  
 Pastoral muse of dappled wing,  
     Tio, tio, tio, tinæ,  
 Perch'd with whom in leafy shade,  
 On the hill-tops, in the glade,  
     Tio, tio, tio, tinæ,  
 I have poured thro' mellow throat,  
 To our Pan the holy note,  
 To the goddess of the hill,  
 For her dance, the choral trill,  
     Toto, toto, toto, tinæ,  
 Whilst from the sweet-breathing measure,  
     Phrynius, like wandering bee,  
     Suck'd ambrosial poesy,  
 Storing up the honied treasure.  
     Tio, tio, tio, tinæ."

BIRDS, v. 737. *of the original.*

Yet these passages are actually done into threadbare prose in the work before us.

The translator has, we will venture decidedly to say, entirely mistaken the manner of his original, and has rendered the whole in the broad coarse style of modern farce. We can assure the "member of one of the universities," that such was not the style of Aristophanes. Had he never met with the hackneyed distich—

Αἱ χαριτες τέμενος τι λαβεῖν ὅπερ ὄχι πεσεῖται  
 Ζτῆσαν, Ψυχὴν εὖρον Ἀριστοφάνης.

*Elements of Chymical Philosophy.* By Sir Humphry Davy,  
L. L. D. Secretary to the Royal Society. Part I. v. 1.

[From the British Review.]

WE opened this work with great expectation; we have not been disappointed. It is the work of a man whose discoveries have formed an era in chymistry—who has studied the science not merely in books, but in the operations of the laboratory, and in the phenomena of nature; and who has been for many years accustomed to deliver popular illustrations of it. No person has better qualifications for a work upon the elements of chymical philosophy; and we bestow no mean praise when we say, that we think he has executed the task in a manner worthy of himself.

The materials, and the arrangement of the materials, are equally new. Respecting the former we shall speak last, as we have most to say upon it. The arrangement is simple and clear, and the parts well connected. An elegant, learned, and concise history of chymistry forms the introduction. It is the first which has appeared that is not a copy of Bergmann's. Sir H. Davy has not, like the Swedish chymist, gone into remote antiquity in search of the origin of chymistry;—to Cain and Tubal-cain—but has shown that chymistry was not even known to the Greeks; that its birthplace was the furnace of the alchymist, and that its native country was Arabia. He has brought down his historical sketch to the present time, and thus traced the progress of chymistry from an art to a science. The present volume constitutes only the first part of the whole work, but it is all that has yet appeared. The subjects treated are, “the laws of chymical changes; and the undecomposed bodies, with their primary combinations.” The first division of the work relates to the powers of matter in general; the second, to radiant or ethereal matter, as heat, light, electricity, and magnetism; the third, to empyreal, undecomposed substances, viz. oxygen and chlorine, and their combinations with each other; the fourth, to the undecomposed inflammable substances not metallic, and their combinations with the preceding bodies and with each other; the fifth, to the metals and their primary combinations; the sixth, to substances the nature of which is not fully known, and the seventh and last, to the analogies between the undecomposed substances, speculations respecting their nature, and the relations of their compounds.



This arrangement in the present state of our knowledge is excellent, particularly as it separates the certain from the doubtful, the known from the unknown, the established truths of science and generalizations of facts from speculative views and analogical reasonings.

It is not our intention to enter into a minute analysis of this work, but to consider the striking features which give it character, and the new and general doctrines which it contains.

When we compare what chymistry is at present with what it was fifty years ago, we are filled with astonishment. The German philosophy was then the fashion of the times, and the German school was at the height of its glory. A few substances only were known, and those very vaguely; the number of the ancient metals was indeed somewhat enlarged, but the chymists of those days had not learnt to distinguish the different kinds of earths, and they were not at all acquainted with the different kinds of gasses. They called all the airs they met with factitious airs, and conceived them to be all merely different modifications of the air of the atmosphere. Statics had not been brought into the laboratory. The great agent was fire; and the "philosophers by fire" let the gasses, or spirits, as they were called, escape in their experiments, and rejected the fixed residue, the "caput mortuum," as useless. By means of a few elements borrowed jointly from the Greeks and the alchemists, with the assistance of their main spring phlogiston, they were able to explain in a manner satisfactory to *themselves* all the changes in art, and all the grand operations in nature—and they were contented. Such nearly was the state of the science when Dr. Black discovered the existence of carbonic acid gas; a discovery which may be truly said to have given wings to chymistry. It at once demonstrated that prevalent opinion to be erroneous which supposed the existence of only one species of elastic fluid, and rendered it more than probable that what had been neglected under the title of factitious airs, were distinct and peculiar gasses. The light which from this one discovery burst upon all departments of chymistry, roused the zeal of inquirers in this country to the investigation of gaseous bodies, and their labours were rewarded with the most brilliant success. Cavendish, by the discovery of hydrogen, and of the composition of water and nitric acid, and Priestley, by the discovery of nitrous gas, nitrous oxide, and the composition of the atmosphere, obtained, as it were, the keys of nature's laboratory. Black, Cavendish, Priestley, were the founders of pneumatic chymistry, and may with propriety even be called the founders

of the science of chymistry; inasmuch as these active investigators, and pre-eminently among them Mr. Cavendish, first introduced weights and measures, and applied them for the establishment of chymical truth. The development of the doctrines of latent heat by Black, the analytic labours of Scheele and Bergmann, and the generalization of facts by Lavoisier, constituted the first stage of modern chymistry.

Let us pause a moment to consider the character of the last-mentioned philosopher, who formed a party and a school, and left a proud name behind him in this department of science. The merit of Lavoisier was that of a sound logician, not of a discoverer. He was strongly impressed with the importance of keeping the imagination under the discipline of experiment; that nothing must be taken for granted, nothing admitted to exist that is not made evident to the senses; that occult causes, and unknown bodies, and all the remains of scholastic trifling and alchymical mysticism should be banished from the new philosophy; that truth was to be reached by the road of induction, and that scientific principles must be acquired from the comparison and expansion of individual facts. To make one proposition of the whole, that all bodies are to be considered as simple substances, which have not yet been decomposed. The defective part of his great design was the French nomenclature, which, though admirably adapted to a perfect science, was not at all suited to one in its infancy. It was a tight garment that did not admit of enlargement, well fitted to the man, but very unfavourable to the growing child.

After the discovery of the Leyden phial, in 1746, electricity became a subject both of popular and scientific attention. It was next to a miracle that an invisible power of such an extraordinary nature, as to be capable of melting the hardest metals, producing all the phenomena of light and fire, and destroying even animal life itself, should be confinable in a glass vessel, and subject to be arrested in its progress by silk. Neither was the interest in electricity diminished by the labours of Franklin, who identified it with the lightning of heaven, and by the simplest means, by a school-boy's kite, realized the fable of antiquity respecting the Promethean theft. In the progress of inquiry, fresh wonders were added to electricity. The lightning of the thunder-storm was found to be wielded by some of the inhabitants of the deep: the gymnotus, the silurus, the torpedo, were proved to be armed with this power, and capable of voluntarily employing it as a weapon of attack or defence. But still electricity was



unconnected with chymistry, and remained an insulated science, being analogous to nothing but magnetism.

In 1800, the first step was taken to connect the two sciences by the great discovery of the pile of Volta. This instrument, whilst in action, might be compared with an inexhaustible Leyden phial, always capable of giving shocks, of producing the phenomena of heat and light, and of operating various chymical changes of an extraordinary kind. It decomposed water and acids, and metallic salts, and, what is very remarkable, the separated elements of water were not evolved together, but maintained their distinct places; the hydrogen at the part determined to be the negative extremity, and the oxygen at the positive end. The power, too, was found identical with common electricity, differing merely in degree, not in kind, and just the same as that possessed by the torpedo. Like common electricity, it gave the shock, produced heat and light, melted metals, and passed imperceptibly over their surfaces; was stopped by glass, silk, and similar substances, and might be transferred to a glass jar, and there confined. We need not state that common electricity was found capable of producing similar chymical changes.

To no one is Voltaic electricity so much indebted as to Sir H. Davy for the discovery of its principles of action, and for the application of it, as an instrument of research, to chymical analysis. He detected the errors of Pacchioni and Sylvester, who had asserted that, by the operation of electricity, muriatic acid and fixed alkali were formed on the decomposition of water; and he exploded their notions, that the muriatic, oxymuriatic, and nitric acids, as well as the volatile and fixed alkalies were all of similar origin, and merely different oxides of hydrogen. He proved that the alkalies and acids they had supposed to be generated, were previously existing in the substances employed in the experiments, and only produced. He proved, at the same time, that the decomposing powers of the Voltaic battery are so energetic, that the firmest rocks, the hardest minerals, and most vehement chymical affinities, are incapable of resisting them, and that the smallest quantities are within the scope of its power. He thus drew out from rocks and salts, from animal and vegetable substances, their constituent parts, and detected some of their minutest ingredients. He determined various laws respecting electrical action and chymical decomposition; as, that inflammable and metallic substances, that earths, alkalies, and metallic oxides, are attracted by the negative extremity or pole of the battery, being themselves positive; that oxygen, chlorine, and acids, are attracted by the positive pole, because they themselves are

negative; that chymical attractions are put to rest or destroyed by superior electrical attractions; and that bodies may be transferred, without interruption, from one pole to another even through fluids, having naturally a strong chymical attraction for them. These views, which first appeared in his publications in the Philosophical Transactions, are again developed and illustrated in his "Elements of Chymical Philosophy," together with the theory of the action of the Voltaic battery; which action he does not attribute primarily to chymical changes, but to the contact of the different metals and fluids.

The more clearly to convey a notion of his theory, we shall have recourse, as he has done, to the common electrical machine. When a body that is a non-conductor is brought into the neighbourhood of the prime conductor, it acquires two electrical states, or "polarities," as our author expresses it: the negative one is that nearest the positive conductor; the positive one is that most remote. The same occurs in respect to the Voltaic battery, when pieces of steel wire are placed in water; connected with a powerful combination, they separately acquire polarities, as if they were influenced by a powerful magnet; they arrange themselves with their positive poles farthest from the positive pole of the battery, and the negative nearest, and they acquire similar powers of chymical decomposition. These facts are readily applicable to the action of the battery. The battery does not differ from the electrified wires, but in having within itself the source of its own electricity, instead of possessing a borrowed power. Each pair of metals is analogous to one wire; one of the pair is positive, the other negative. Sir H. Davy supposes the water to be capable of becoming electrically polar, and one part of it, viz. that extremity of a particle which is nearest the positive metal acquires negative polarity, and the other part, in consequence, acquires positive polarity; while the different series of metals so influence each other, that the power of the whole combination increases with the number and surface of the plates.

Though electrical action is not primarily dependent on chymical changes, as the early inquirers imagined, yet are they intimately connected, as appears from the impossibility of preserving a permanent action of the battery without the assistance of chymical agents, and from the circumstance that those substances excite the battery most powerfully which act on the metals most rapidly. The explanation offered by Sir H. Davy is, that the tendency of electrical action is to return to its equilibrium; and that the tendency of chymical action is to destroy this equilibrium. Thus, when a commu-



nication is made between the negative and positive cylinders of a common electrical machine, there is an immediate rest, or cessation, of all action; and in a similar way the Voltaic battery would cease to act when its extremities are joined, were it not for the chymical changes taking place: oxygen and chlorine, and acids themselves negative bodies, are attracted by the positive metallic surfaces, and hydrogen and alkalis themselves positive, are attracted by the negative metallic surfaces; those individuals capable of entering into combination with the metals, unite with them, and the electrical equilibrium is momentarily restored; but the combinations formed being soluble in the water, are removed from the metals; and the gasses evolved, being thus disengaged, the equilibrium of electricity is again disturbed, and the electrical action continued.

Our author, in a satisfactory manner, accounts for the fact, that the action of a battery, on imperfect conductors, such as water, the human body, and similar substances, increases with the number of plates; whilst its action on perfect conductors increases with the size of the plates. Those imperfect conductors, it is said, can only discharge a very minute quantity of electricity, probably not more than the smallest battery possesses; therefore, they are only affected by a difference of intensity, and the greater the intensity of the electricity is, the more they are affected; but the intensity or the energy of the electrical polarities is independent of quantity of surface, and is proportionable only to the number of pairs of plates. On the other hand, the perfectly conducting metals are capable of discharging large quantities of electricity, consequently, they are affected by the quantity; and as the quantity is proportionable to the surface, the effect of a battery, on perfect conductors, will be proportionate to the surface. These important principles Sir H. Davy has explained at length in his *Elements*, and proved and illustrated the hypothesis by a series of happy experiments. He has endeavoured to determine the exact ratio in which the intensity of the battery, and the quantity of electricity, increase with the number of similar plates, and also the ratio of increase of quantity, with the increased size of the plates. And from experiments apparently admitting of much accuracy, he concludes, that the intensity of the battery is as the square of the number;—that the quantity of electricity is as the number of equal plates;—but that the quantity or power of acting on perfect conductors is in a very high ratio with the increased surface, probably higher than even the square.

Sir H. Davy observes, that “electrical effects are exhibited

by the same bodies when acting in masses, which produce chymical phenomena when acting by their particles; it is not therefore improbable, that the primary cause of both may be the same, and that the same arrangements of matter, or the same attractive powers, which place bodies in the relations of positive and negative, *i. e.* which render them attractive of each other electrically, and capable of communicating attractive powers to other matter, may likewise render their particles attractive, and enable them to combine when they have full freedom of motion." This ingenious speculation, which the author justly complains has been attacked and misrepresented by those who did not understand his views, has good analogies in its favour. Heat and light are the common effects of strong electrical and chymical action. Those bodies which in masses most powerfully excite each other electrically by contact, when their particles have freedom of motion, most readily combine chymically, as the acids and alkalies; the metals and sulphur:—and when the natural electrical state of a body is artificially exalted, its chymical attraction also is exalted, and when the former is destroyed, the latter, too, is no longer exerted. No finer illustration can be given of these truths than the effects attending the action of the Voltaic battery.

Sir H. Davy has used this instrument with the greatest success, and by opposing the superior electrical attractions to the natural chymical ones, he has penetrated into the composition of various bodies, that had long baffled all research. By the same methods, from the fixed alkalies, which are well known to be corrosive, dull, and very soluble substances, he has extracted bodies of metallic lustre, exhibiting the colour and splendour of silver, and like metals, perfect conductors of heat and electricity. They are, nevertheless, the lightest bodies in nature, and the most inflammable substances known: the basis of potash takes fire on water and ice, and both of them decompose all bodies known to contain oxygen; so that no little ingenuity of contrivance was necessary to preserve them, and prevent their return to their original state by the absorption of oxygen. The discoverer of these bases of the fixed alkalies, considers them as metals, and has, accordingly, called them potassium and sodium. But his views and his names, though now generally adopted, have met with some weak opposition from those on whom the extraordinary features of the new bodies made the deepest impression—namely, their lightness and inflammability connected with their alkaline origin. We must acknowledge, that his reasons for this classification appear to us perfectly conclusive.



It is founded on obvious analogies of the most decisive character. Were minute differences to be taken into account, there would be as many classes of bodies as there are now individuals. The principle of scientific arrangement is to go from the more general, or common properties, to those which are less common and particular, and thus kingdoms, classes, orders, &c. are arrived at. To determine the propriety of Sir H. Davy's classification, we must inquire what are the characters essentially constituting the class of metals. Certainly those are not the properties to seize in making a classification, which are constantly varying, and are different in almost every individual, as colour and specific gravity; but those which uniformly exhibit themselves in all metals, as opacity, the metallic lustre, the power of freely conducting electricity and caloric, and the power of forming chymical combinations with certain substances. If these latter are considered essential characters to the exclusion of the former, as we do not hesitate in asserting that they should be, no doubt will remain respecting the metallic nature of the bases of the fixed alkalies: and there is no less propriety, we conceive, in the names given by Sir H. Davy to these bodies, than in the places he has assigned them. Aware of the evils of the French nomenclature, founded upon hypothetical views, he has purposely avoided names connected with theory, and has chosen such as may remain unchanged during the perpetual fluctuation of systems. This being the case, we cannot but reprobate the vain spirit of innovation that invents names without discovering things; and makes distinctions where there are no real differences. Thus, in France, some chymists, in pursuance of their particular views, have thought proper to call the bases of the alkalies, metalloids, instead of metals; and what is more to be wondered at, these terms have constantly been imported into use by some in our own country. Names, to the true philosopher, who looks and examines beyond names, signify but little, but, to the superficial inquirers, who are satisfied with their acquisition, they are of great importance. And those given by discoverers should be held as sacred as the names given by parents to their children, not to be trifled with, and altered, at every one's capricious taste, but only to be changed when called upon by absolute necessity.

A rapid and brilliant course of discovery was the consequence of the decomposition of the fixed alkalies, and the further application of the Voltaic battery to the chymical analysis. The alkaline earths had long been suspected to contain metallic matter, and this suspicion was verified by

Sir H. Davy, who, by various ingenious devices, separated their bases from oxygen, and examined them sufficiently to ascertain their metallic nature, and some of their physical qualities, and showed that they approached the common metals in density and fixedness in the fire, though they greatly exceeded them in their affinity for oxygen. The decomposition of the common earths, and the demonstration of the metallic nature of their bases soon followed; but his experiments were not so satisfactory on this subject as on those we have just mentioned, and much remains to be done to make us acquainted with the character of these new metals. The speculations arising from these discoveries are very curious, and promise to throw much light upon various subjects hitherto but little understood. They do not concern the surface of our globe, as much as the hidden depths and inexplorable heights.

There are two kinds of phenomena equally mysterious and wonderful, viz. volcanoes and meteoric stones. Earthquakes and volcanoes have long been the admiration of philosophers, and the terror of the vulgar.

Various attempts in all ages have been made to explain their origin, and all the causes hitherto assigned have been equally inadequate. The very existence of meteoric stones has only lately become credible, but no sooner was it believed, than their formation was attempted to be explained: some supposed them to be particles from the moon, sent to our earth by the projectile force of volcanoes; others imagined that they were formed in the higher regions of our atmosphere; and the idea that they were the fragments of broken planets had its supporters.

The inquisitive mind of man will be for ever speculating on the unknown, and endeavouring to reconcile it with the known. For the explanation of volcanoes, the very inflammable metals of the alkalies and earths appear far better adapted, than any of the imaginary causes yet assigned. Nothing is required, but to suppose these bodies existing in the bowels of the earth. They would be inflamed by the influx of water, and such an inflammation may well be thought to produce the phenomena of earthquakes and volcanoes. And this supposition is equally consistent with the products of volcanoes and the mean density of the earth. Ascending to the higher regions, and to meteoric stones, these may be considered as coming into our atmosphere composed of the metals of those earths which they are found to contain; and thus, though their origin is left undetermined, their ignited state, their fused surface, and some other appearances connected with them, may be explained.



These discoveries of Sir H. Davy, while they offer explanation of the destructive and terrible in nature, are also calculated to disclose the manner in which the harmony and order of the universe are preserved. Chymical changes are constantly going on in our rocks and mountains, tending to the ruin of the high lands, the filling up of valleys, and the overflowing of seas; but underneath, in the tranquil bosom of the earth, electrical changes produced by means of vast natural combinations of different strata and different fluids, may be in action, and as powerfully renovating below as the chymical changes are degrading above, and as rapidly preparing new continents as they are wasting the old. We have glanced at these hypothetical views, not because they are dwelt upon in Sir H. Davy's work, who is too judicious to mingle them with the established truths of science, but on account of their probable connexion with his discoveries, and the grandeur of the speculations they suggest.

Other substances besides those already mentioned have experienced the power of the Voltaic battery, and that of the alkaline metals. Berzelius and Pontin, two celebrated Swedish chymists, effected the amalgamation of ammonia, as it has been called, by the Voltaic instrument. This is an extraordinary experiment, and one of the greatest chymical wonders of the 19th century, already so prolific in wonders. When a globule of mercury moistened with liquid ammonia is negatively electrified by the battery, it greatly increases in volume, and acquires a butyraceous consistence and a crystalline texture. As soon as it is separated from the battery, its decomposition commences, as if it had no independent existence; hydrogen and ammonia are evolved, and the mercury returns to its former state. The different opinions which have appeared respecting this amalgam are noticed in the last division of the Elements, where its nature is ably discussed. From analogy it was inferred to consist of mercury and the metal of ammonia; and from direct experiments it was concluded to be a compound of mercury and hydrogen with nitrogen. The latter composition, however inconsistent with our established systems, is the only one warranted by facts. Granting this composition of the amalgam, which has perfectly metallic characters, a suspicion cannot but be formed of the compound nature of the other metals; and that hydrogen truly is, what the later phlogistians supposed to be the general inflammable and metallizing principle. But there are other experiments that warrant other views, and one in particular, which we cannot pass by, described by Sir H. Davy in his work, which is no less extraordinary than the amalgam

itself. When a globule of mercury was put into a vessel full of water, and the vessel connected with a powerful Voltaic combination, the globule became affected—it acquired polarity—oxide was formed at the positive pole, but no hydrogen evolved at the negative, except when the conducting power of the water was increased by the addition of salt, and then a vibratory motion which before appeared, ceased to be produced. The author has minutely examined all the circumstances of the experiment, and cannot account for the disappearance of the hydrogen, without supposing that water in different electrical states constitutes the ponderable matter of oxygen and hydrogen. Nothing prevents the adoption of this conclusion at present, but its immense importance, and the wary spirit of the philosopher.

From the alkalies and earths Sir H. Davy extended his researches to the undecomposed acids, the boracic, fluoric, and muriatic. By means of potassium, he effected the decomposition of boracic acid, and both by analysis and synthesis proved it to consist of an inflammable basis united to oxygen. The same means applied to fluoric acid were not equally efficacious, and we still remain in a great measure ignorant of the nature of this body, which has not yet been obtained in an insulated state, but is always found combined with water, silex, or boracic acid.

He has been more successful with respect to muriatic and oxymuriatic gas. His discoveries have quite reversed the order of our notions respecting the composition of these bodies. The former, which was long considered as the simple substance, he has proved to be compounded; and the latter, which was supposed to be compounded, and to consist of muriatic acid and oxygen, he has shown to be simple, and to be contained in muriatic acid gas united to hydrogen. The series of facts by which he has arrived at these conclusions are of the most important and decisive nature. We shall not follow his route in the gradual development of his doctrines, but mention merely those facts which appear sufficient to establish their truth. Charcoal intensely ignited, remains unaltered in oxymuriatic gas; sulphur and phosphorus do not extract oxygen from it, but form with it peculiar compounds, and the metals do not become oxidated in it, but uniting with it, form that class of bodies formerly called dry muriats. To be brief, oxygen cannot be obtained from oxymuriatic gas, either by potassium, or the immense power of the Voltaic battery, and can only be procured when substances are used known to contain oxygen, and which are proved to be decomposed in the experiment. The facts respecting muriatic



gas are equally clear. When equal volumes of oxymuriatic gas and hydrogen are inflamed together, this gas alone is formed; there is no deposition of water, and no water can be procured from it, excepting when compounds are used known to contain water or oxygen. Sir H. Davy does not assert that oxymuriatic gas may not contain oxygen; he merely maintains that it has not yet been decomposed, and that till it has been decomposed, it must be considered as a simple substance. The name oxymuriatic is evidently not very consistent with its simple nature, and he has accordingly discarded it and substituted chlorine, which expresses a physical quality of the gas. The same necessity of change extending to all substances containing chlorine, a total reform in this part of nomenclature became absolutely necessary; and we are happy to say has been effected on the most philosophical principles. The new names proposed by Sir H. Davy for this class of bodies are independent of theory, and will not require change, whatever discoveries may be hereafter made relative to their composition, which is a great advantage in a progressive science like chymistry. A superficial observer might perhaps complain, that as these names convey no information respecting the constituent parts of substances, they are of no assistance to the student, and a great burden to the memory. But such an objection, were it correct, is of little importance; their advantage is, that they convey accurate ideas, and cannot retard the progress of discovery. The object of science being truth, that nomenclature is best which most promotes its acquisition.

Sir H. Davy considers chlorine and oxygen analogous to each other, and to be similar acidifying principles; he has accordingly placed them together in his Elements in one class, in opposition to all other substances. Chlorine, like oxygen, is attracted by the positive pole of the Voltaic battery, and repelled by the negative. Both form acids by union with certain inflammable substances. The metallic combinations of both are also allied in many properties: and there are triple combinations of chlorine with carbon and hydrogen, very similar to certain vegetable substances, of which carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen are the constituent parts.

This doctrine respecting chlorine appears to us one of the most perfect parts of the whole theory of chymistry. Satisfied with embracing the known, it does not extend to the unknown; nothing in it is taken for granted, and nothing imagined; it rests wholly upon sound logic and true philosophy. The fate of all new doctrines is opposition, and this doctrine is not an exception. The very few who are dissatisfied with it, defend

the old hypothesis, as the phlogistians did their expiring creed. Since they are obliged to acknowledge that muriatic acid gas is not a simple substance, they call it a compound of an unknown basis and water; and since they will not grant oxy-muriatic gas to be a simple substance, they call it a compound of the same unknown basis and oxygen; and this unknown basis, say they, is muriatic acid. Assertions and imaginations of such a description might, among the alchymists, very well pass for sound arguments and realities, but in the present state of the science, they are unworthy of serious consideration.

One of the most interesting parts of Sir H. Davy's work is that on "chymical attraction, and the laws of combination and decomposition." In this chapter he develops the doctrine that bodies combine only in certain definite proportions, and controverts the opinion that they are capable of uniting in all quantities. His arguments are facts, which are alone deserving of confidence in an experimental science. By an appeal to facts, the accuracy of which cannot be doubted, he has satisfactorily shown that a substance either combines with one quantity of another, or with a double, triple, or quadruple quantity of it, or to express it more concisely, with some multiple or divisor of that quantity. Thus there are four distinct combinations of oxygen and nitrogen, viz. nitrous oxide, nitrous gas, nitrous acid gas, and pale nitric acid: the first is composed of one quantity or proportion of nitrogen and one proportion of oxygen, the weights of which are to each other as 26 to 15; the second consists of one proportion of nitrogen, the number of which is 26, and two proportions of oxygen, which are equivalent to 30, or twice 15; the third contains four proportions of oxygen to one of nitrogen, and the fourth five to one. He has also proved that the relation of the proportions, or of the saturating powers of substance, is constant and regular, so that their states being ascertained, in respect to neutrality, or the excess of one ingredient or the other, the composition of bodies may be calculated on a few data, and chymistry be reduced almost to a mathematical science. Thus, oxygen combines with twice its volume of hydrogen, and twice its volume of chlorine, to form water and euchlorine; and two volumes of hydrogen require two volumes of chlorine, to form muriatic acid gas. Thus, there are two combinations of phosphorus and chlorine, the one a liquid, and the other a solid body, and both decompose and are decomposed by water; the hydrogen of which, uniting with the chlorine, forms muriatic acid gas, and the oxygen uniting with the phos-



phorus, in one instance, forms phosphorous acid, and in the other phosphoric;—or in other words, the phosphorus which was combined with two proportions of chlorine, can only acquire, by the decomposition of water, two proportions of oxygen, and that which in the solid substance was united with three proportions of chlorine, cannot, by the decomposition of water, acquire less than three proportions of oxygen.

We shall give another example, and from Sir H. Davy's work. "There is not," says he, "perhaps in the whole series of chymical phenomena, a more beautiful illustration of the theory of definite proportions than that which is offered in the decomposition of hydrophosphorous acid (which consists of four proportions of phosphorous acid and two of water.) Four proportions of the acid contains four proportions of phosphorus, and four of oxygen; two proportions of water contain four proportions of hydrogen, and two of oxygen. The six proportions of oxygen unite to three proportions of phosphorus to form three of phosphoric acid, and the four proportions of hydrogen combine with one of phosphorus to form one proportion of hydrophosphoric gas, and there are no other products. This relation of proportions might be illustrated in a thousand ways, particularly by the decomposition of metallic salts by metals, and of earthy salts by alkalies;—in the former, when the salts are neutral, there is merely an exchange of metals, the one taking the place of the other, without any exchange whatever in the combined proportions of oxygen and acid: so that M. Gay Lussac's law, respecting these neutral metallic salts, is perfectly correct,—that the acid is proportionable to the oxygen, and that the one being known, the quantity of the other may be calculated.

This doctrine, in its present extended form, is of very recent origin. When chymistry began to be cultivated as a science, all those who investigated the subject of affinities, seemed satisfied that bodies were capable of combining only in certain determinate proportions, but their views were not at all definite, and apparently rather the result of general speculations on the nature of attraction, than induction from facts. Mr. Higgins was the first who descended to particulars, and embracing the corpuscular philosophy, attempted to prove that bodies combine particle to particle, and, of course, in definite quantities. Thus, he considered water a binary compound of one particle of hydrogen and one of oxygen, and sulphureous acid gas as a similar compound of one of sulphur and one of oxygen, whilst he supposed sulphuric acid to be a ternary compound of one particle of sulphur and two of oxygen. But Mr. Higgins's views were

very much neglected till the attention of the learned were directed to them by Sir H. Davy; and Mr. Dalton had all the merit of being the original founder of this doctrine. Mr. Dalton is certainly deserving of great praise for what he has done. He revived the theory when it was entirely forgotten, and supported it with much ability; extending its empire, and showing its agreement with a great number of facts. Of all the authors who have written on it, Sir H. Davy, in the present work, has taken the most comprehensive view of the subject, and introduced, by means of his original researches, the greatest harmony into all its parts. And he, too, has the merit of separating it from the corpuscular philosophy, and of making facts its only foundation. Mr. Dalton, on the contrary, appears to be a fond disciple of Leucippus and Democritus, who, above 2,000 years ago, taught that all things were composed of immutable atoms. This philosopher not only believes in the existence of atoms, but even imagines himself acquainted with their invisible forms, and conceives himself capable of calculating their relative weights and their number in any given volume of elastic fluid. Admitting his premises, his conclusions we will allow are capable of demonstration; but the existence of atoms, and even of matter itself, must be taken for granted, and does not admit of rigorous proof. We, therefore, consider the science as much indebted to Sir H. Davy for having divested this important theory entirely of its hypothetical dress, and placed it before the eyes of his readers in its proper attitude.

Nothing can show to greater advantage the benefits of the theory of definite proportions than the work before us. Everywhere there is the greatest precision; the compositions of bodies are rigorously ascertained and compared together; no ingredient is overlooked as insignificant; water in particular, hitherto so much neglected, has received a due attention, as forming a part of the character of the compound. The proportions of the constituent parts of bodies are represented by numbers, and the memory is but little burdened with retaining them, as each simple substance has always the same numerical representative. Thus 15 is the general symbol of oxygen, and 26 of nitrogen, so that when the proportions are known in which they combine together, the weights of the constituent parts are most readily found.

The late progress of this theory has been surprisingly rapid. It now embraces all the substances we are accurately acquainted with. The numbers representing oxygen and chlorine, hydrogen, sulphur, phosphorus, and carbon, and most of the metals, have been determined, and the proportions



in which all these substances combine respectively with each other, is in a great measure ascertained. So that chymistry is now become almost a numerical science, and its operations admit of being reduced to numerical exactness.

The refutation which the author has given of Berthollet's doctrines appears to us to be completely satisfactory. He has repeated some of his experiments, and found them incorrect; others he has explained on more simple principles; and Paff has proved, in some of the particular instances adduced by the French chymist himself, that quantity or mass has no influence in modifying the results, or of enabling weak to overcome powerful attractions. We must confess that this refutation affords us no little pleasure, as Berthollet's views had not the simplicity of truth to recommend them, and their tendency was to create confusion, and to render chymistry an art rather than a science. "If chymical attraction," observes Sir H. Davy, "be regarded as capricious in its effects, and as tending constantly to produce different arrangements, chymistry is left without a guide, without any certain combinations, and no results of analysis can be perfectly alike: but fortunately for the progress of science, this is not the case: the changes of the terrestrial cycle of events, like the arrangement of the heavens, and the system of the planetary motions, are characterized by uniformity and simplicity; weight and measure can be applied to them, their order perceived, and their laws discovered."

We cannot, in conclusion, deny ourselves the satisfaction of transcribing the following extract, as a specimen of the ruling impressions which the ardent and successful pursuit of science has left upon the mind of Sir Humphry Davy. "It is contrary to the usual order of things, that events so harmonious as those of the system of the earth, should depend upon such diversified agents as are supposed to exist in our artificial arrangements: and there is reason to anticipate a great reduction in the number of the undecomposed bodies, and to expect that the analogies of nature will be found conformable to the refined operations of art. The more the phenomena of the universe are studied, the more distinct their connexion appears, the more simple their causes, the more magnificent their design, and the more wonderful the wisdom and power of their AUTHOR."

We have little doubt that these solemn views of the grandeur and simplicity of the works of God have been useful to Sir H. Davy in the regulation of his scientific pursuits, and have given a zest to every object. Nor can we withhold from him the tribute of our thanks, for his virtuous, and, we

hope, successful endeavours in all his public addresses on his favourite science, to impress on the minds of his pupils those sentiments which have afforded to himself so much pleasure and advantage.

In all his illustrations and analogies, (and even his manners have received a tincture from the ruling impressions of his mind,) he seems constantly to bear in recollection the humble and beautiful exclamations of the Psalmist: "The heavens are thine; the earth also is thine; as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. The north and the south thou hast created them; Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name."



## SPIRIT OF MAGAZINES,

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SAINT GEORGE.

[From Brady's Clavis Calendaria.]

THE accounts rendered by different authors of the history of St. George have been so various in their nature, and some of them blended with such gross absurdities, that the very existence of this great and popular saint has not only been doubted by several modern writers, but by some has been wholly denied; while others have so industriously mixed in one heterogeneous mass, the ancient and well-authenticated account of George of Cappadocia, with that of *another* George, an abominable and infamous character, who was an Arian bishop, that it has occupied much labour and ingenuity to separate the histories of the two St. George's, and to show, divested of the fables too prevalent in former periods, the real and unsullied history of *that* St. George who is designed to be commemorated on this day, (April 23,) and who, it clearly appears, was born in Cappadocia, of christian parents, of considerable respectability, though at the period of his birth possessing only a small patrimony. St. George was carefully educated in the belief of the gospel, in the defence of which his father lost his life while the saint was yet of very tender years. Upon the decease of his father, St. George accompanied his mother into Palestine, where they came into possession of a large estate. Dioclesian the tyrant, who knew not of his being a christian, and admired his majestic and noble form, appointed him a commander in one of his legions, with the dignity of a seat in the council. In the twentieth year of his age he lost his maternal parent, and wholly dedicated himself to his military duties, in which he became eminently distinguished: but during the height of his reputation, the persecution of the christians burst forth with increased violence and aggravated cruelty; upon which St. George withdrew himself from the service of the tyrant, whom he had the courage publicly to upbraid, in the senate, with his barbarities; and openly distributed his vast fortune for the support of those against whom the persecutors of christianity, headed by the

emperor, were exerting their utmost malice. The emperor, amazed and irritated at the daring boldness of St. George, seemed at first determined upon his destruction; but the many services rendered to him by that great man induced him to suspend his vengeance, and he endeavoured by every means in his power to continue the hero in his service. Alike unmoved by promises of aggrandizement, and unawed by threats, St. George continued firm in his opposition to the tyrannies of the hardened emperor; for which, after having several times endured the torture, he was ignominiously drawn through the city of Lydda, and beheaded on the 23d day of April, 290. The surviving christians buried his mutilated remains, the sepulchre containing which remained in tolerable preservation until the year 1180: and we find, that his head was solemnly translated to the great church built in honour of him in the eighth century, by pope Zachary, who attended the ceremony, accompanied by the whole of the clergy, and most of the laity of Rome.

From these facts sprang those fabulous statements of the combat of St. George with a dragon, to preserve the daughter of a king, who otherwise would have been devoured by the monster; and from that fable, the many others connected with the popular belief of past periods, as may be seen by the history of the Seven Champions of Christendom, as well as in various other ancient histories and ballads.

St. George having been a soldier of superior rank, was not unnaturally depicted on horseback, armed cap-a-pie, which appears to have been the practice before the eleventh century; and when at a later period, the story of the dragon's overthrow became a favourite with the multitude, the addition of that monster was a necessary appendage, to give consistency to the legend, and make it accord with the new but erroneous history of the saint. Whether, however, the fabrication of this fictitious part of the saint's life and actions originated in monkish craft, to gain a superstitious power over the ignorant multitude, or whether the whole of that story was meant symbolically, to typify that Christ's soldier and knight should always be ready manfully to combat against the *dragon*, or *great beast*, mentioned in the Apocalypse, and all other enemies of the church, is a matter of doubt. In accounting for the strange introduction of the insignia of St. George, there are not wanting advocates for both these arguments, though the latter has met the most able supporters, who contend, with much apparent historical authority, that the hieroglyphical representation of the saint preceded the fable, and not the fable the emblem; and indeed it is scarcely possible to believe



otherwise. Richard Johnson, who lived in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, was the author of the Seven Champions, the origin of that species of popular ballads; and he appears not to have disfigured the history of St. George one atom more than he has that of the other champions; and yet St. George's history alone appears to be disputed solely upon that foundation, while that of the other saint-heroes have not been affected by it. One of these popular ballads, apparently the most modern, not only gives the genealogy of St. George, and states his having been stolen by a fairy, but assigns to him marks, which have past dispute a direct reference to the institution of the Garter.

"A blood-red cross was on his arm,  
 "A dragon on his breast:  
 "A little Garter all of gold,  
 "Was round his leg exprest."

This history of St. George, as an *eastern* personage, renders it likely that he was popular in Palestine when the English crusaders met the Saracens in the bloody fields of that country: and it seems to furnish authority for the more ancient account of the origin of the order of the Garter, which might naturally take its rise in the very land where the reputation of this saint was greatest, and his patronage was deemed most efficacious.

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#### ANECDOTES OF THE BARON MONTESQUIEU.

[By the Earl of Charlemont.]

"IN travelling through France, I happened, luckily for me, to get acquainted with Mr. Elliott, a gentleman of Cornwall, whose excellent understanding, cultivated and improved by the best education, and animated by a mind of the most pleasing cast, rendered him the most agreeable of companions. We travelled together for some time, and finding ourselves not very far from Bordeaux, we determined not to miss the opportunity of going there, not so much prompted thereto by the beauty of the town, and the adjacent country, as by our ardent desire of seeing, and of knowing, the President Montesquieu. Arrived at Bordeaux, our first inquiry was concerning the principal object of our journey; but how great was our disappointment, when we found that he had left the city, and was gone to reside at a country seat, four or five miles distant. To leave our longing unsatisfied was truly mortifying to us; and yet what could be done? At length,

after a long deliberation, we determined to strike a bold stroke; and, getting the better of all timidity, perhaps propriety, we sat down and wrote a joint letter, in which we candidly told the president our reasons for visiting Bordeaux, our sad disappointment, our eager wishes for the honour of his acquaintance, which, as English subjects, we most particularly desired; concluding by begging pardon for our presumption, and leave to wait on him at his villa. Neither did we languish long for an answer; it quickly arrived, in every respect as we would have wished, and consisted of a modest acknowledgment for the honour we did him, assertions of the high esteem in which he held our country, and the most hearty and pressing invitation to come to him as soon as our occasions would permit. The first appointment with a favourite mistress could not have rendered night more restless; and the next morning we set out so early that we arrived at his villa before he was risen. The servant showed us into his library, where the first object of curiosity that presented itself was a table, at which he had apparently been reading the night before, a book lying upon it open, turned down, and a lamp extinguished. Eager to know the nocturnal studies of this great philosopher, we immediately flew to the book; it was a volume of Ovid's works, containing his elegies, and open at one of the most gallant poems of that master of love. Before we could overcome our surprise, it was greatly increased by the entrance of the president, whose appearance and manner was totally opposite to the idea which we had formed to ourselves of him: instead of a grave, austere philosopher, whose presence might strike with awe such boys as we were, the person who now addressed us was a gay, polite, sprightly Frenchman; who, after a thousand genteel compliments, and a thousand thanks for the honour we had done him, desired to know whether we would not breakfast, and, upon our declining the offer, having already eaten at an inn not far from the house, "Come then," says he, "let us walk; the day is fine, and I long to show you my villa, as I have endeavoured to form it according to the English taste, and to cultivate and dress it in the English manner." Following him into the farm, we soon arrived at the skirts of a beautiful wood, cut into walks, and paled round, the entrance to which was barricadoed with a moveable bar, about three feet high, fastened with a padlock. "Come," said he, searching in his pocket, "it is not worth our while to wait for the key; you, I am sure, can leap as well as I can, and this bar shall not stop me." So saying, he ran at the bar, and fairly jumped over it, while we followed him with amazement, though not



without delight, to see the philosopher likely to become our playfellow. This behaviour had exactly the effect which he meant it should have. He had observed our awkward timidity at his first accosting us, and was determined to rid us of it: all that awe with which, notwithstanding his appearance, his character had inspired us, and that consequent bashfulness which it must have occasioned, was now taken off; his age and awful character disappeared; and our conversation was just as free and as easy as if we had been his equals in years, as in every other respectable qualification. Our discourse now turned on matters of taste and learning. He asked us the extent of our travels; and, as I had visited the Levant, he fixed himself particularly on me, and inquired into several circumstances relative to the countries where I had been, in many of which I had the good fortune to satisfy him. He lamented his own fate, which had prevented his seeing those curious regions, and descanted with great ability on the advantages and pleasures of travel. ‘However,’ said he, ‘I too have been a traveller, and have seen the country in the world which is most worthy our curiosity—I mean England.’ He then gave us an account of his abode there, the many civilities he had received, and the delight he felt in thinking of the time he had spent there. ‘However,’ continued he, ‘though there is no country under Heaven which produces so many great and shining characters as England, it must be confessed, that it also produces many singular ones, which renders it the more worthy our curiosity, and, indeed, the more entertaining. You are, I suppose, too young to have known the Duke of Montagu: that was one of the most extraordinary characters I ever met with; endowed with the most excellent sense, his singularity knew no bounds. Only think! at my first acquaintance with him, having invited me to his country seat, before I had leisure to get into any sort of intimacy, he practised on me that whimsical trick which, undoubtedly, you have either experienced, or heard of; under the idea of playing the play of an introduction of ambassadors, he soused me over head and ears into a tub of cold water. I thought it odd, to be sure; but a traveller, as you well know, must take the world as it goes, and, indeed, his great goodness to me, and his incomparable understanding, far overpaid me for all the inconveniences of my ducking. Liberty, however, is the glorious cause; that it is, which gives human nature fair play, and allows every singularity to show itself, and which, for one less agreeable oddity it may bring to light, gives to the world ten thousand great and useful examples.’

“ With this, and a great deal more conversation, every word of which I would wish to remember, we finished our walk, and having viewed every part of the villa, which was, as he had told us, altogether imitated from the English style of gardening, we returned to the house, were shown into the drawing-room, and were most politely received by Madame la Baronne and her daughter. Madame de Montesquieu was an heiress of the reformed religion, which she still continued to profess. She was an elderly woman, and apparently had never been handsome. Mademoiselle was a sprightly, affable, good-humoured girl, rather plain, but, at the same time, pleasing; these, with the president’s secretary, whom we afterwards found to be an Irishman, formed our society. The secretary spoke nothing but French, and had it been possible that Elliott and I, in our private conversation, could have uttered any thing to the disadvantage of our hosts, we might have been disagreeably trapped by our ignorance of his country; but nothing of that kind could possibly happen; every thing we said was to the praise of the president, and the politeness shown us by his family. Our dinner was plain and plentiful; and when, after having dined, we made an offer to depart, the president insisted upon our stay; nor did he suffer us to leave him for three days, during which time his conversation was as sprightly, as instructive, and as entertaining as possible. At length we took our leave, and returned to Bordeaux, whither we were escorted by the secretary, who now, to our great surprise, spoke English, and declared himself my countryman.

“ The baron, though still styled president, had lately resigned that office on the following occasion:—the intendant of the province, a man whose ideas were far more magnificent than merciful, had taken it into his head that he would make Bordeaux the finest city in France, and, for that purpose, had caused to be delineated on paper the plan of a new quarter, where the streets were laid out in the most sumptuous manner, of a great breadth, and in lines directly straight. This plan, with the approbation of the court, he had now begun to execute, and that without the least consideration that the streets which he was laying out not only cut through gardens, vineyards, but the houses of citizens and gentlemen, which, if they happened to stand in the way, were instantly levelled with the ground; and that without any determined indemnification to the owner. The president saw this tyranny, detested and resisted it; and, by his influence and authority, for a while suspended the execution. Both parties appealed to Versailles, where the affair was examined into, and where the good pre-



sident made use of all his influence in behalf of his countrymen, he himself not being in the smallest degree interested. But the intendant prevailed; and orders were issued, that at all events the plan should be pursued. The president justly discontented, obtained leave to part with his office, and Bordeaux is now the most magnificent city in France, built on the ruin of hundreds. Consider this, ye degenerate Englishmen, who talk without abhorrence of arbitrary power!

“ Having remained at Bordeaux a competent time, Elliott and I parted, and I set out for Paris, where I was no sooner arrived, than Monsieur de Montesquieu, who had been there some days before me, most kindly came to see me, and, during the time of my abode in that metropolis, we saw each other frequently, and every interview increased my esteem and affection for him.

“ I have frequently met him in company with ladies, and have been as often astonished at the politeness, the gallantry, and sprightliness of his behaviour. In a word, the most accomplished, the most refined *petit-maitre* of Paris, could not have been more amusing, from the liveliness of his chat, nor could have been more inexhaustible in that sort of discourse which is best suited to women, than this venerable philosopher of seventy years old. But at this we shall not be surprised, when we reflect, that the profound author of *L'Esprit des Loix* was also author of the *Persian Letters*, and of the truly gallant *Temple de Gnide*.

“ He had, however, to a great degree, though not among women, one quality, which is not uncommon with abstracted men—I mean absence of mind. I remember dining in company with him at our ambassador's, Lord Albemarle, where, during the time of dinner, being engaged in a warm dispute, he gave away to the servant, who stood behind him, seven clean plates, supposing that he had used them all. But this was only in the heat of controversy, and when he was actuated by that lively and impetuous earnestness, to which, though it never carried him beyond the bounds of good breeding, he was as liable as any man I ever knew. At all other times he was perfectly collected; nor did he ever seem to think of any thing out of the scope of the present conversation.

“ In the course of our conversation, Ireland and its interests have often been the topic; and upon these occasions I have always found him an advocate for a union between that country and England. ‘ Were I an Irishman,’ said he, ‘ I should certainly wish for it; and, as a general lover of liberty, I sincerely desire it; and for this plain reason, that an inferior country, connected with one much her superior in force, can

never be certain of the permanent enjoyment of constitutional freedom, unless she has, by her representatives, a proportional share in the legislature of the superior kingdom.'

"A few days before I left Paris to return home, this great man fell sick; and, though I did not imagine, from the nature of his complaint, that it was likely to be fatal, I quitted him, however, with the utmost regret, and with that sort of foreboding, which sometimes precedes misfortunes. Scarcely was I arrived in England, when I received a letter from one whom I desired to send me the most particular accounts of him, communicating to me the melancholy news of his death; and assuring me, what I never doubted, that he had died as he lived, like a real philosopher; and what is more, with true christian resignation. What his real sentiments, with regard to religion, were, I cannot exactly say. He certainly was not a papist; but I have no reason to believe that he was not a christian: in all our conversations, which were perfectly free, I never heard him utter the slightest hint, the least word, which savoured of profaneness; but, on the contrary, whenever it came in his way to mention christianity, he always spoke of its doctrine and of its precepts with the utmost respect and reverence: so that, did I not know that he had too much wisdom and goodness to wish to depreciate the ruling religion, from his general manner of expressing himself, I should make no scruple freely to declare him a perfect christian. At his death the priests, as usual, tormented him, and he bore their exhortations with the greatest patience good humour, and decency; till at length, fatigued by their obstinate and tiresome pertinacity, he told them that he was much obliged for their comfort, but that, having now a very short time to live, he wished to have those few minutes to himself, as he had lived long enough to know how to die. A day or two before his death, an unlucky circumstance happened, by which the world has sustained an irreparable loss. He had written the history of Louis the Eleventh, including the transactions of Europe during the very important and interesting period of that prince's reign. The work was long and laborious, and some, who had seen parts of it, have assured me that it was superior even to his other writings. Recollecting that he had two manuscripts of it, one of them perfect and the other extremely mutilated, and fearing that this imperfect copy might fall into the hands of some ignorant and avaricious bookseller, he gave his valet de chambre the key of his escritoir, and desired him to burn that manuscript, which he described to him. The unlucky valet burnt the fair copy, and left that from which it was impossible to print.



“ There is nothing more uncommon than to see, in the same man, the most ardent glow of genius, the utmost liveliness of fancy, united with the highest degree of assiduity and of laboriousness. The powers of the mind seem in this to resemble those of the body. The nice and ingenious hand of the oculist was never made to heave the sledge, or to till the ground. In Montesquieu, however, both these talents were eminently conspicuous. No man ever possessed a more lively, a more fanciful genius. No man was ever more laborious. His *Esprit des Loix* is, perhaps, the result of more reading than any treatise ever yet composed. M. de Secondat, son to the president, has now in his possession forty folio volumes in his father's hand writing, which are nothing more than the common-place books, from whence this admirable work was extracted. Montesquieu, indeed, seems to have possessed the difficult art of contracting matter into a small compass, without rendering it obscure, more perfectly than any man who ever wrote. His *Grandeur et Decadence des Romains* is a rare instance of this talent; a book in which there is more matter than was ever before crammed together in so small a space. One circumstance with regard to this last-mentioned treatise has often struck me, as a sort of criterion by which to judge of the materialness of a book. The index contains nearly as many pages as the work itself.”

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ANECDOTES OF THE MEXICANS, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF  
MEXICO, ITS LAKES, &c.

[From Walton's State of the Spanish Colonies.]

ANAHUAC was the original name given to the vale of Mexico, and signifies near to the water. The city of Mexico was anciently called Tenochtitlan; it was founded A. D. 1325, and is, beyond a doubt, much the largest and most beautiful city in the New World. It is situated in latitude  $20^{\circ} 2'$  north, and in longitude  $100^{\circ} 34'$  west, from the meridian of London.

The finest district in the kingdom of Mexico is the vale itself of Mexico, crowned by beautiful and verdant mountains, whose circumference, measured at their base, exceeds one hundred and twenty miles. A great part of this vale is occupied by two lakes; the water of Chalco, the upper lake, is sweet; that of Tezcucó, the lower lake, is brackish. They communicate by a canal. In the lower lake, (on account of its lying in the very bottom of the valley,) all the waters run-

ning from the mountains collect ; from thence, when extraordinary abundance of rains raised the waters of the lake of Tezcucu over its bed, it overflowed the city of Mexico, which is situated on an island in the lake of Tezcucu. These inundations happened not less frequently under the Mexican monarchy, than since it has been in possession of the Spaniards.

These two lakes, the circumference of which united is not less than ninety miles, represent the figure of a camel, the head and neck of which are formed by the lake of sweet water, or Chalco ; the body, by the lake of brackish water, or Tezcucu ; the legs and feet are represented by the rivulets and torrents which run from the mountains into the lakes. Between these there is the little peninsula of Iztapalapan, which divides them.

The mountains make the air delightfully cool and pleasant, with gentle breezes descending and spreading themselves all around, so that its climate is one of the finest and most salubrious that nature ever formed ; so remarkably temperate, and the variation of the season so very small, that the slightest precautions are sufficient to prevent inconvenience from either heat or cold, and woollen clothing is worn there all the year round. Charles V., who was at the same time Emperor of Germany and King of Spain, asked a witty Spanish gentleman, on his arrival at court from Mexico, how long the interval was in the city of Mexico between summer and winter ? "Just as long," replied the Spaniard, with great truth and humour, "as it takes to pass out of sunshine into the shade."

The circumference of the island on which the city stands, is about twelve miles. For the convenience of passing from this island to the main land, there are three great causeys, formed of earth, stone and timber, raised in the lake. The causey of Iztapalapan, towards the south, is about seven miles in length. The causey of Tepejacac, towards the north, is about three miles in length. The causey of Tlacapan, towards the west, is about two miles in length. They are each about thirty feet in breadth. Besides them, there is another, or fourth causey, a little narrower, in continuation of the double aqueduct of Chapoltepec, two miles distant, by which the fresh water is brought to the entrance of the city, and from thence distributed to the fountains, and all parts of the city, and the island.

All the water which collects in the lake of Tezcucu, is sweet when it first enters ; but it afterwards becomes so very brackish and unwholesome, that if drank, or used in cooking,



by the inhabitants, it gives them fluxes and complaints in the bowels. This bad property arises from the salt and nitrous bed of this lake; hence the island entirely depends on this double aqueduct of Chapoltepec for its supplies of fresh water.

The churches and houses are built of stone and of bricks, and the houses in general, where the ground will bear their weight, are three stories high. The foundations of the large houses of the capital, as at first built by the Mexicans, were laid upon a floor of large beams of cedar, fixed in the earth, on account of the want of solidity in the soil, which example the Spaniards have found it necessary to imitate and adopt. The great square is in the centre of the city, from whence the streets run quite through the whole in a direct line, either north and south, or east and west, crossing each other at right angles, so that the length and breadth of the city may be plainly discerned at the corner of any of the streets, all of which are wide and well paved. There is a public walk with a *jet d'eau*, where eight avenues meet, which is very grand, and the principal squares have each a fountain of water in their centre.

Every morning at sunrise, innumerable boats, canoes, and craft of various descriptions, laden with a vast variety of fruits, herbs, flowers, garden-stuff of all kinds, fish, fowls, turkeys, geese, ducks, venison, game of all kinds, fleshmeat of all kinds, and a variety of other provisions, are seen arriving by the lake at the great market-place of the city, where the inhabitants are supplied with the greatest abundance, and at moderate prices.

The natural strength of the city is great, there being no approaches to it but by the causeys, which may easily be obstructed, by breaking them down at intervals, or by destroying the whole of the causeys, if necessary. All other modes of capture must be by boats, canoes, &c. and cutting off their supplies of provisions, and fresh water, &c. which they receive by the aqueduct of Chapoltepec.

Mexico is an archbishop's see, and contains one most magnificent cathedral, thirty-four public churches, thirty-six monasteries of men, and twenty-nine nunneries of women, with each a church. The cathedral possesses a revenue of ninety thousand pounds sterling per annum, of which the archbishop receives thirty thousand pounds, besides casual fines, which make him fifteen to twenty thousand pounds a year more. The remainder, amounting to sixty thousand pounds, is divided amongst the dignitaries and other clergy.

belonging to this cathedral, which amount to upwards of four hundred, without including organists, musicians, singers, &c.

The cathedral is built in the form of a cross, is lofty and spacious, the windows numerous, the paintings, gilding, and carving, are in a heavy style, and it contains a great number of chapels and superb altars. The high altar stands in the middle of the choir; the riches and treasures therein are great beyond description. The custodia is made of silver, and contains thirty thousand ounces of that metal; it took sixty-four ounces of pure gold to gild it. It contains a great number of silver pillars, and one hundred little images of different saints, all of most rare workmanship. In the centre of the cathedral stands the image of St. Hypolito, the patron of Mexico, as large as life, made of pure gold, and placed on a shrine of silver. In another silver shrine stands an image of the infant Jesus, made of pure gold, and adorned with eight hundred precious stones; likewise a grand silver throne, on which is placed the image of the Blessed Virgin, made of silver, wearing a superb crown, and adorned with a profusion of valuable and precious stones, the whole weighing sixty arrobas of silver, which, at twenty-five pounds in each arroba, make fifteen hundred pounds weight. In the chapel of the Blessed Virgin is a beautiful altar, made of silver and richly inlaid with gold, worked in the most curious manner, by an ingenious artist.

In this cathedral, there are forty-eight candlesticks, all made of silver, each measuring six feet in height, and of curious workmanship. There are three hundred masses said every day in this cathedral. They consume annually at the altars and in the processions, eight hundred arrobas of oil, making 2,500 Spanish gallons; twelve hundred arrobas of wax, making 30,000 Spanish pounds; one thousand arrobas of wine, making 3,125 Spanish gallons. Ten large gold lamps, and thirty large silver lamps, burn oil both night and day. The vestments and other ornaments of the archbishop and the rest of the clergy, as likewise the ornaments exhibited on the altars, are beautiful beyond description, and as rich as can be made, with gold and silver, covered with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and other precious stones of dazzling lustre: gold and silver stuffs, embroidered velvets, satins, silks, &c. are the richest and most valuable that money can purchase and procure, in any part of the world, and were brought from Europe by the register ships. The rest of the churches, the monasteries, and the nunneries, are proportionably rich and splendid, and their revenues are great.

Their warehouses and shops, from their great display of



precious metals and massive jewellery, are the richest and most valuable that can be imagined, though art has done little for their arrangement. Many of their household utensils are made of gold and silver.

The great market-place is a superb and spacious square, in the centre of the city; on one side of it runs an arcade, under which are some of the richest shops, and on the other side stands the magnificent palace of the viceroy of Mexico, built with a large square in the centre, so that it forms four magnificent fronts; the grand front presenting itself to the market-place.

In this city there is a royal mint for the coining of dollars and other silver coins, as likewise of gold coins. There is also a royal university, conducted by some of the most able and learned clergy, masters, and instructors, sent out from Old Spain, which contains upwards of three thousand students, sent from all parts of Mexico, Peru, and the other Spanish settlements. It has eleven hospitals and houses of asylum, all most amply and richly endowed; amongst the rest is an asylum for the reception of young female orphans, who are maintained and educated in a very decent and handsome manner, whilst they remain therein unmarried; and they have five hundred dollars each, given to them as a portion, when they leave this asylum, and marry to a decent, proper person, approved of by the managers.

There is a beautiful park, well planted with trees, and ornamented with fountains and water-works, where the nobility, gentry, and gay part of the inhabitants assemble every evening, some in coaches, great numbers of gentlemen on horseback, with multitudes of men and women on foot; and it is here that the young bucks, cavaliers, and majos, endeavour to attract the notice and favour of the ladies, by feats of activity, and the superb fancy dresses, in which they make their appearance, when mounted on their lively and beautiful horses. Several hundreds of coaches, drawn by two or by four mules or horses, parade here every fine evening, attended by numerous retinues of black slaves, dressed out in the richest liveries, and in which they keep up great state and form; the carriages move very slowly and gently along, in order that those within them may see and be seen the better. The ladies within the carriages make their appearance without veils, in their richest dresses, decorated out, and ornamented with gold, pearls, jewels, diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and other glittering ornaments in their hair, ears, round their necks, and round their wrists, with superb gold watches and equipages, fitted up in the highest style. They take great

pride in having fine heads of hair, which they preserve with the greatest care and attention, in order to make it very thick and very long behind; they wear it plaited down their backs, and in general so long, even when pendant, it reaches down to their feet. They wear no caps, but in their tertulias, or visits, they have ornamental head-dresses. The Mexican ladies, in general, are about the middle stature, very few of them are tall; the greatest part of them have beautiful black hair, fine eyes, and the most regular sets of teeth, remarkably white and even, which they take great pleasure in showing when they laugh; they are remarkably lively in their manner and address, talk a great deal, dance remarkably well, enter a room in the most graceful manner, and no women whatever, in any country in the world, not even those of Cadiz, walk better. They are fond of music, singing, and dancing; the Spanish guitar, in particular, is universally played by them. Their favourite dances are el fandango, which is as much the rage here as in Old Spain; the young, the old, the brisk, the grave, the gay, nay, even the most stupid and dull people, become all alive, and put themselves into motion the very moment the guitar strikes up and begins to play. Las seguidillas, or couplets, are in great vogue, as songs; and minuets, boleros, waltzes, &c. as dances.

The Mexican ladies, in general, are handsome, polite, genteel, and particularly attentive to strangers. Great numbers of them have naturally fair complexions. They are not inferior to the ladies of Old Spain in personal charms: they speak the Spanish language remarkably well, their minds and ideas are clear and comprehensive, their expression pure and just, their manners and their behaviour inimitably graceful and affable.

One of the favourite diversions of the citizens of Mexico is fishing in boats on the lake, whither they carry with them cold provisions, wine, liquors, &c. with which to regale themselves on the water. The neighbourhood of this fine city is rendered remarkably pleasant and beautiful by the numerous palaces, country seats, monasteries, nunneries, churches, large and beautiful towns and villages, which are within view of the city, and built upon the banks of the lakes, to which the citizens go in boats, when they are inclined to retire from the hurry and bustle of the town. Mexico is the most populous city of all those which the catholic king has in his vast dominions, and contains upwards of two hundred thousand inhabitants, which are comprehended under five different classes.

Those who invariably hold the first rank are Spaniards,



born in old Spain, who have settled in Mexico. All offices, places and appointments under the Spanish government, are filled and held by them, the court of Spain being jealous in the extreme of all the other descriptions of people.

The second class, in point of rank, is that of the Criollos, Creoles, or descendants from Spaniards who formerly settled in America. Great numbers of these Creoles are very rich, have most elegant houses and furniture, and very large estates in land, which gives them greater influence in the colonies than the court of Spain approves of; therefore, she adopts such plans as she thinks will lessen their consequence. She never employs them in offices of power and trust under her government, whence arise jealousies of preference given to the first class. These Creoles in general are too indolent and luxurious to engage in trade of any kind; the commerce and navigation to and from Old Spain, as well as the internal traffic of the colonies, have always been carried on by the natives of Old Spain, who accumulate immense fortunes thereby, and generally return with them to their native country.

The third class, in point of rank, is that of the people of colour, under the denomination of Mulattoes, Mestizoes, Sambos, and Quadroons; they are the offspring of Europeans and Creoles, with negroes, Indians, Mulattoes, &c. and may properly be styled a mixed breed of such a diversity of heterogeneous gradations from the white to the black, that among a hundred faces, scarcely two are of the same colour. The handicraft and mechanic trades are carried on by them, in all which kinds and descriptions of labour both the Spaniards and the Creoles disdain to employ themselves, and depend upon this third class of people for the supply of the various articles which they may want, and which are not procured from Europe.

The fourth class, in point of rank and real utility, is that of the negroes. They are employed as menial servants: on gala and parade days, and visits, they drive the carriages and attend their masters and mistresses, dressed out in their richest liveries. They work in the fields, in the mines, &c. The free negroes receive, as their own private property, rewards and wages, and whatever they may gain by their own labour. The negro slaves are generally employed to work by their own masters and mistresses; in case they are hired out to work for other people, their wages and gains belong to their owners, by whom they are clothed, fed, and supported; in case of sickness and inability to work, every assistance is rendered to them. The negroes look upon themselves as a

race of people superior to the Indians, in point of knowledge and abilities, and treat them as their inferiors. This kind of supercilious conduct and contemptuous behaviour is carried to so great an extreme by the negroes, that they and the Indians have a mutual and violent hatred and aversion to each other. Though there is a great number of blacks in the province of New Spain, they are mostly free people ; and the slaves are comparatively few.

The fifth, and most inferior class, in point of rank, is that of the proper Americans, or native Indians, descended from the ancient peoplers of America. They are those who have not mixed their blood with the people of the old continent. They are a free people, (except a small annual tribute of about one hard dollar, or four shillings and sixpence English, which each male Indian, from the age of eighteen to fifty years, pays to the Spanish government,) and cannot be compelled to work, but in such time, manner, and kinds of work as are agreeable to themselves. When disposed to work, they are employed in cultivating the lands, and in raising the various kinds of produce, as cacao, wheat, maize, rice, beans, &c. and as herdsmen, shepherds, &c. They likewise work in the mines of gold, silver, copper, &c. and whatever they gain by their labour is their own property. Their employers pay them a very fair and reasonable price in proportion to the value of their labour : when working in the fields they gain from one to two English shillings per day, and when in the mines, they gain from half a dollar (two shillings and three-pence English) to one hard dollar (four shillings and sixpence English) per day. In Spanish America, no European whatever is to be seen employed in the labours of the field.

The Mexican Indians are of a good stature, generally rather exceeding than falling short of the middle size, and well proportioned in all their limbs : they have good complexions, narrow foreheads, black eyes, clean, firm, regular, white teeth, thick, black, coarse, glossy hair, thin beards, and generally no hair upon their legs, thighs and arms. Their skin is of an olive colour. There is scarcely a nation, perhaps, upon earth, in which there are fewer persons deformed ; and it would be more difficult to find a single humpbacked, lame, or squinteyed man amongst a thousand Mexicans, than among a hundred of any other nation. Their appearance neither engages nor disgusts ; but among the Indian young women there are many very handsome and fair : they have a sweetness of manner and expression, and a pleasantness and natural modesty in their whole behaviour. The men



are very moderate in eating ; but their passion for strong liquors is carried to the greatest excess.

A peculiar feature in the description of Mexico is, the celebrated artificial fields and gardens which float in the lakes, and add to their picturesque appearance. The original method of forming them is extremely simple : they plait and twist willows, and the roots of marsh plants, or other materials together, which are light, but capable of supporting the earth of the garden firmly united. Upon this foundation they lay the light bushes which float on the lake, and over all, the mud and dirt which they draw up from the bottom. The regular figure of these islands is quadrangular, their length and breadth various, but in general they are about eight perches long, and not more than three perches in breadth, and have less than a foot of elevation above the surface of the water. These were the first fields which the Mexicans owned after the foundation of the city of Mexico ; there they first cultivated the maize, great pepper, and other plants necessary for their support. In process of time, as these fields grew numerous, from the industry of those people, there were cultivated among them gardens of flowers and of odoriferous plants, which were used in the worship of the gods, and likewise served for the refreshment of the nobles. At present they cultivate flowers, herbs, and every kind of garden-stuff. Every day of the year, at sunrise, innumerable boats laden with flowers, fruits and vegetables, which are cultivated in these gardens, are seen arriving by the canal at the great market-place of that capital. All kinds of plants thrive therein surprisingly ; the mud of the lake is an extremely fertile soil, and requires no irrigation. In the largest gardens there is commonly a little tree, and even a little hut, to shelter the cultivator, and defend him from rain or the sun. When the chinampa, or owner of a garden, wishes to change its situation, to remove from a disagreeable neighbour, or to come nearer to his own family, he gets into his little vessel, and by his own strength alone, if the garden is small, or with the assistance of others, if it is large, he rows it after him, and conducts it wherever he pleases, with the little hut and tree upon it. That part of the lake where the floating gardens are, is a place of infinite recreation and amusement, where the senses receive the highest gratification, and multitudes of people are constantly visiting them in boats, on parties of pleasure.

## BIOGRAPHY

OF

## COMMODORE DECATUR.

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR is of French descent by the male line. His grandfather was a native of La Rochelle, in France, and married a lady of Rhode-Island. His father, Stephen Decatur, was born in Newport, (Rhode-Island,) and when a very young man removed to Philadelphia, where he married the daughter of an Irish gentleman by the name of Pine. He was bred to the sea, and commanded a merchant vessel out of the port of Philadelphia until the establishment of the navy, when he was appointed to command the Delaware sloop of war. He continued in her until the frigate Philadelphia was built, when the command of that ship was given to him, at the particular request of the merchants, who had built her by subscription. In this situation he remained until peace was made with France, when he resigned his commission, and retired to his residence a few miles from Philadelphia, where he resided until his death, which happened in November, 1808.

His son, STEPHEN DECATUR, the present commodore, was born on the 5th January, 1779, on the eastern shore of Maryland, whither his parents had retired, whilst the British were in possession of Philadelphia. They returned to that city when he was a few months old, and he was there educated and brought up.

He entered the navy in March, 1798, as midshipman, and joined the frigate United States, under the command of Commodore Barry, who had obtained the warrant for him. He continued for some time with that officer, and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. The United States at that time required some repairs, and, not wishing to remain in port, he requested an order to join the brig Norfolk, then bound to the Spanish Main. He performed one cruise in her, as first lieutenant, and on his return to port, resumed his station on board of the United States, where he remained until peace was concluded with France.



He was then ordered to the *Essex*, as first lieutenant, and sailed with Commodore Dale's squadron to the Mediterranean. On the return of that squadron he was ordered to the *New-York*, one of the second Mediterranean squadron, under the command of Commodore Morris.

When he returned to the United States he was ordered to take command of the *Argus*, and proceed in her to join Commodore Preble's squadron, then in the Mediterranean, and on his arrival there to resign the command of the *Argus* to Lieutenant Hull, and take the schooner *Enterprise*, then commanded by that officer. After making that exchange he proceeded to Syracuse, where the squadron was to rendezvous. On his arrival at that port he was informed of the fate of the frigate *Philadelphia*, which had ran aground on the Barbary coast, and fallen into the hands of the Tripolitans. The idea immediately presented itself to his mind of attempting her recapture or destruction. On Commodore Preble's arrival, a few days afterwards, he proposed to him a plan for the purpose, and volunteered his services to execute it. The wary mind of that veteran officer at first disapproved of an enterprise so full of peril; but the risks and difficulties that surrounded it only stimulated the ardour of Decatur, and imparted to it an air of adventure, fascinating to his youthful imagination.

The consent of the commodore having been obtained, Lieutenant DECATUR selected for the expedition a ketch (the *Intrepid*) which he had captured a few weeks before from the enemy, and manned her with seventy volunteers, chiefly from his own crew. He sailed from Syracuse on the 3d February, 1804, accompanied by the United States brig *Syren*, Lieutenant Stewart, who was to aid with his boats, and to receive the crew of the ketch, in case it should be found expedient to use her as a fireship.

After fifteen days of very tempestuous weather, they arrived at the harbour of Tripoli a little before sunset. It had been arranged between Lieutenants Decatur and Stewart, that the ketch should enter the harbour about ten o'clock that night, attended by the boats of the *Syren*. On arriving off the harbour, the *Syren*, in consequence of a change of wind, had been thrown six or eight miles without the *Intrepid*. The wind at this time was fair, but fast declining, and Lieutenant Decatur apprehended that, should

he wait for the Syren's boats to come up, it might be too late to make the attack that night. Such delay might be fatal to the enterprise, as they could not remain longer on the coast, their provisions being nearly exhausted. For these reasons he determined to adventure into the harbour alone, which he did about eight o'clock.

An idea may be formed of the extreme hazard of this enterprise from the situation of the frigate. She was moored within half gun shot of the Bashaw's Castle, and of the principal battery. Two of the enemy's cruisers lay within two cables' length, on the starboard quarter, and their gun boats within half gun shot, on the starboard bow. All the guns of the frigate were mounted and loaded. Such were the immediate perils that our hero ventured to encounter with a single ketch, beside the other dangers that abound in a strongly fortified harbour.

Although from the entrance to the place where the frigate lay was only three miles, yet, in consequence of the lightness of the wind they did not get within hail of her until eleven o'clock. When they had approached within two hundred yards, they were hailed and ordered to anchor, or they would be fired into. Lieut. Decatur ordered a Maltese pilot, who was on board the ketch, to answer that they had lost their anchors in a gale of wind on the coast, and therefore could not comply with their request. By this time it had become perfectly calm, and they were about fifty yards from the frigate. Lieutenant Decatur ordered a small boat that was alongside of the ketch, to take a rope and make it fast to the frigate's fore chains. This being done they began to warp the ketch alongside. It was not until this moment that the enemy suspected the character of their visitor, and great confusion immediately ensued. This enabled our adventurers to get alongside of the frigate, when Decatur immediately sprang aboard, followed by Mr. Charles Morris,\* midshipman. These two were nearly a minute on the deck, before their companions could succeed in mounting the side. Fortunately, the Turks had not sufficiently recovered from their surprise to take advantage of this delay. They were crowded together on the quarter deck, perfectly astonished and aghast, without making any attempt to oppose

\* Now Captain Morris of the Adams.



the assailing party. As soon as a sufficient number of our men had gained the deck, to form a front equal to that of the enemy, they rushed in upon them. The Turks stood the assault but a short time, and were completely overpowered. About twenty were killed on the spot, many jumped overboard, and the rest fled to the main deck, whither they were pursued and driven to the hold.

After entire possession had been gained of the ship, and every thing prepared to set fire to her, a number of launches were seen rowing about the harbour. This determined Lieutenant Decatur to remain in the frigate, from whence a better defence could be made than from on board the ketch. The enemy had already commenced firing upon them from their batteries and castle, and from two corsairs that were laying near. Perceiving that the launches did not attempt to approach, he ordered that the ship should be set on fire, which was done, at the same time, in different parts. As soon as this was completely effected they left her, and such was the rapidity of the flames, that it was with the utmost difficulty they preserved the ketch. At this critical moment a most propitious breeze sprang up, blowing directly out of the harbour, which, in a few minutes, carried them beyond the reach of the enemy's guns, and they made good their retreat without the loss of a single man, and with but four wounded.

For this gallant and romantic achievement, Lieutenant Decatur was promoted to the rank of post captain, there being at that time no intermediate grade. This promotion was particularly gratifying to him, inasmuch as it was done with the consent of the officers over whose heads he was raised.

In the ensuing spring, it being determined to make an attack upon Tripoli, Commodore Preble obtained from the King of Naples the loan of six gun boats and two bombards, which he formed into two divisions, and gave the command of one of them to Captain Decatur, the other to Lieutenant Somers. The squadron sailed from Syracuse, consisting of the frigate Constitution, the brig Syren, the schooners Nautilus and Vixen, and the gun boats.

Having arrived on the coast of Barbary, they were for some days prevented from making the attack, by adverse wind and

weather; at length, on the morning of the 3d of August, the weather being favourable, the signal was made from the commodore's ship to prepare for action, the light vessels towing the gun boats to windward. At 9 o'clock the signal was made for bombarding the town and the enemy's vessels. The gun boats were cast off, and advanced in a line ahead, led on by Captain Decatur, and covered by the frigate Constitution, and the brigs and schooners. The enemy's gun boats were moored along the mouth of the harbour under the batteries, and within musket shot. Their sails had been taken from them, and they were ordered to sink, rather than abandon their position. They were aided and covered likewise by a brig of 16 and a schooner of 10 guns.

Before entering into close action Capt. Decatur went alongside each of his boats, and ordered them to unship their bowsprits and follow him, as it was his intention to board the enemy's boats. Lieut. James Decatur commanded one of the boats belonging to Lieut. Somers's division, but being further to windward than the rest of his division, he joined and took orders from his brother.

When Capt. Decatur, who was in the leading boat, came within range of the fire from the batteries, a heavy fire was opened upon him from them and from the gun boats. He returned their fire, and continued advancing until he came in contact with the boats. At this time Commodore Preble, seeing Decatur approaching nearer than he thought prudent, ordered the signal to be made for a retreat; but it was found that in making out the signals for the boats, the one for a retreat had been omitted. The enemy's boats had about forty men each; ours an equal number, twenty-seven of whom were Americans and thirteen Neapolitans. Decatur, on boarding the enemy, was instantly followed by his countrymen, but the Neapolitans remained behind. The Turks did not sustain the combat, hand to hand, with that firmness they had obtained a reputation for: in ten minutes the deck was cleared; eight of them sought refuge in the hold; and of the rest, some fell on the deck, and others jumped into the sea. Only three of the Americans were wounded.

As Decatur was about to proceed out with his prize, the boat which had been commanded by his brother came under his stern, and informed him that they had engaged and captured one of the



enemy; but that her commander, after surrendering, had treacherously shot Lieut. James Decatur, and pushed off with the boat, and was then making for the harbour.

The feelings of the gallant Decatur, on receiving this intelligence, may more easily be imagined than described. Every consideration of prudence and safety was lost in his eagerness to punish so dastardly an act, and to revenge the death of a brother so basely murdered. He pushed within the enemy's line with his single boat, and having succeeded in getting alongside of the retreating foe, boarded her at the head of eleven men, who were all the Americans he had left.

The fate of this contest was extremely doubtful for twenty minutes. All the Americans except four were now severely wounded. Decatur singled out the commander as the peculiar object of his vengeance. The Turk was armed with an esponton, Decatur with a cutlass; in attempting to cut off the head of the weapon, his sword struck on the iron and broke close to the hilt. The Turk at this moment made a push, which slightly wounded him in the right arm and breast. He immediately seized the spear and closed with him. A fierce struggle ensued, and both fell, Decatur uppermost. By this time the Turk had drawn a dagger from his belt, and was about to plunge it in the body of his foe, when Decatur caught his arm, and shot him with a pistol, which he had taken from his pocket. During the time they were struggling on the deck, the crews rushed to the aid of their commanders, and a most sanguinary conflict took place, insomuch, that when Decatur had despatched his adversary, it was with the greatest difficulty he could extricate himself from the killed and wounded that had fallen around him.

It is with no common feeling of admiration that we record an instance of heroic courage, and loyal self devotion, on the part of a common sailor. During the early part of Decatur's struggle with the Turk, he was assailed in rear by one of the enemy, who had just aimed a blow at his head with his sabre that must have been fatal; at this fearful juncture, a noble hearted tar, who had been so badly wounded as to lose the use of his hands, seeing no other means of saving his commander, rushed between him and the uplifted sabre, and received the blow on his own head, which

fractured his skull. We love to pause and honour great actions in humble life, because they speak well for human nature. Men of rank and station in society often do gallant deeds, in a manner from necessity. Their conspicuous situation obliges them to do so, or their eagerness for glory urges them on; but an act like this we have mentioned, so desperate, yet so disinterested; done by an obscure, unambitious individual, a poor sailor, can spring from nothing but innate nobleness of soul. We are happy to add that this generous fellow survived, and now receives a pension from government.

Decatur succeeded in getting with both of his prizes to the squadron, and the next day received the highest commendation, in a general order, from Commodore Preble. When that able officer was superseded in the command of the squadron, he gave the Constitution to Capt. Decatur, who had, some time before, received his commission.\* From that ship he was removed to the Congress, and returned home in her when peace was concluded with Tripoli. On his return to the United States, he was employed in superintending gun boats, until the affair of the Chesapeake, when he was ordered to supersede Commodore Barron in the command of that ship, since which period he has had the command of the southern squadron. When the United States was again put in commission, he was removed from the Chesapeake to that frigate.

The foregoing particulars were furnished us by a friend, as materials from which to form a biography; but we were so well pleased with the simplicity, conciseness and modesty of the narration, that we resolved to lay it before our readers with merely a few trivial alterations.

The present war with Great Britain has given Commodore Decatur another opportunity of adding to the laurels he had already won. On the 25th October, 1812, in lat. 29 N. long. 29 30 W. he fell in with his Britannic Majesty's ship Macedonian, mounting 49 carriage guns. This was one of the finest frigates in the British navy, and commanded by Captain John S. Carden,

\* It was dated the 16th February, 1804, the day on which he destroyed the Philadelphia. He also received a vote of thanks and a sword, for that achievement.



one of the ablest officers. She was in prime order, two years old, and but four months out of dock. The enemy being to windward, had the advantage of choosing his own distance; and, supposing the United States to be the Essex, (which only mounts carronades,) kept at first at long shot, and did not at any moment come within the complete effect of the musketry and grape. After the frigates had come to close action the battle was terminated in a very short period, by the enemy's surrender. The whole engagement lasted for an hour and a half, being prolonged by the distance at which the early part of it was fought, and by a heavy swell of the sea. The superior gunnery of the Americans was apparent in this, as in all our other actions. The Macedonian lost her mizen-mast, fore and main top-masts and main yard, and was much cut up in the hull. Her loss was thirty-six killed, and sixty-eight wounded. The damage of the United States was comparatively trivial, four killed and seven wounded; and she suffered so little in her hull and rigging, that she might have continued her cruise, had not Commodore Decatur thought it important to convoy his prize into port. His reception of Captain Carden on board of the United States was truly characteristic. On presenting his sword, Decatur observed that he could not think of taking the sword of an officer who had defended his ship so gallantly, but he should be happy to take him by the hand.

We are sorry to observe that Captain Carden has not been ingenuous in his account of this affair. He mentions that, "after an hour's action the enemy backed and came to the wind, and *I was then enabled to bring her to close action.*" Now, on the contrary, we have it from the *very best authority*, that the United States was close haled to the wind, and her commander was extremely anxious to come to close quarters. There are other parts of Capt. Carden's official letter that are exceptionable, but we shall pass them over without comment. It is natural for a proud and gallant mind to writhe under humiliation, and to endeavour to palliate the disgrace of defeat; but a truly magnanimous spirit would scorn to do it at the expense of a brave and generous foe. Capt. Carden *must* know that he had it in his power to close with the United States whenever he pleased, and that there was no movement on the part of Commodore Decatur to prevent

it. We again repeat, that it is with regret we notice any instance of disingenuousness in an officer whose general character we admire, and whose deportment at all times to our countrymen has been such as to entitle him to their highest good will.

It is not one of the least circumstances of Commodore Decatur's good fortune, or rather good management, that he convoyed his prize, in her shattered condition, across a vast extent of ocean, swarming with foes, and conducted her triumphantly into port; thus placing immediately before the eyes of his countrymen a noble trophy of his own skill, and of national prowess.

Such has been the brilliant career of this naval hero. In private life his fortune has been equally propitious. Honoured by his country, beloved by his friends, and blessed by the affections of an amiable and elegant woman.\* He is now in the very prime of life, pleasing in his person, of an intelligent and interesting countenance, and an eye in whose mild and brilliant lustre, spirit, enterprise and urbanity are happily blended. His deportment is manly and unassuming, and his manners peculiarly gentle and engaging; uniting the polish of the gentleman with the frank simplicity of the sailor. It is with the most perfect delight that we have noticed our naval officers, on returning from the gallant achievements which are the universal topics of national pride and exultation, sinking at once into unostentatious and quiet citizens. No vainglorious boastings, no puerile gasconades, are ever heard from their lips; of their enemy they always speak with courtesy and respect; of their own exploits, with unaffected modesty and frankness. With the aspiring ardour of truly brave spirits, they pay but little regard to the past; their whole souls seem stretched towards the future. Into such hands we confide, without apprehension or reserve, our national interests and honour; to this handful of gallant worthies is allotted the proud destiny of founding the naval fame of the nation, and of thus having their names inseparably connected with the glory of their country.†

\* Some years since Commodore Decatur was married to Miss Wheeler, of Norfolk, a lady celebrated for her accomplishments, and at that time a reigning belle in Virginia.

† The frigates United States and Macedonian are both lying in the port of New-



*Memoirs of the life of George Frederick Cooke, Esq. late of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. By William Dunlap, 2 vols. small 12mo. New-York, D. Longworth.*

AMONG the many foibles with which we are gifted by good dame Nature, she has liberally endowed us with one, which, if wicked satirists speak true, is the more peculiar attribute of her own sex; we allude to a prurient curiosity to know the private history of great men. Nothing delights us more than when we can pry into the domestic concerns of those personages who have played distinguished parts before the world; whether mighty potentates of real life, who govern the destinies of nations, or the mimic monarchs who strut with equal vainglory at the head of puissant armies of twenty men, and tyrannise over an empire of some sixty feet square of painted pasteboard. We love to cope with these Proteus beings in their familiar haunts, their social, unbuttoned moments: to see them divested of all the trappings of royalty, and to find, that purple, ermine, diadem, tinsel, gilt leather, and all their other "lendings" once laid aside, they are but "poor, bare, forked animals," like ourselves. In a preceding number of this work, we had a peep behind the scenes of a real sovereign;\* in the

York, and are easily compared with each other. They have been measured, and the following are the results:

	length of deck	breadth of beam	tonnage
United States	176 feet	48 feet	1405
Macedonian	166	48 8 in.	1325

Each vessel has 15 ports on a side, on the main deck; the first carries 24 and the latter 18 pounders thereon. The carronades of each, on the quarter deck and fore-castle, are of the like calibre; and the only further difference is, that the United States had five more of them. It is false that our frigates carry 44lb. carronades; they have only 32's.

The gallant conduct of Commodore Decatur, in capturing the Macedonian, has been rewarded by numerous tokens of public gratitude. He has received a vote of thanks and medal from congress; a vote of thanks and sword from the state of Virginia; a vote of thanks from Maryland; a vote of thanks and sword from Pennsylvania; a sword from the city of Philadelphia; a vote of thanks from Massachusetts; a vote of thanks from the state of New-York; the freedom of the city of New-York, and has been elected an honorary member of the Cincinnati Society of that state. Public dinners have been given him, and various other entertainments.

\* Vide Review of Memoires de la Princesse de Bareith, Analectic Mag. No. 4.

work before us we are furnished with the private life of a monarch of the stage: the pictures they present are equally gross, ludicrous, and humiliating to human nature—they both form striking contrasts to the parade of public exhibition; though, of the two, we certainly think the private character of George Frederick Cooke by far the most respectable; and we really owe an apology to his mighty shade for having accidentally put him in such bad company.

We cannot but look back with great good will to this frail, eccentric, but extraordinary being. We recollect many an hour of rational entertainment, furnished by his surprising talents; we consider him as having contributed much towards improving national taste in a distinguished branch of elegant amusement; and we feel very much obliged to him for the great compliment he paid this country, in thinking it worth coming to. We lay some stress on this last reason, because, in fact, it not only speaks well for Mr. Cooke, but it is a promising omen for ourselves. It certainly argued no little degree of enterprise for a man of Mr. Cooke's age, to leave a distinguished situation in England, where he was sure of profit and applause, to tempt the dangers of the sea, and to voyage three thousand miles for the purpose of playing before American audiences. It showed that he had a better idea of the state of society in this country, of the opulence and population of our cities, and the taste of their inhabitants, than, we grieve to say, is generally entertained by his countrymen. We therefore repeat, that we consider Mr. Cooke as having paid our country a great practical compliment in visiting it.

We believe that he was not disappointed in the expectations he had formed. On the contrary, he frequently expressed his surprise at the size and style of our theatres; he was gratified by the numerous and crowded audiences that he attracted, the judicious applause that he received, the kind treatment which, in spite of his failings, he experienced in private life; and, had he possessed common prudence and frugality, he might have reaped a golden harvest from his exertions. Beside these gratifying circumstances that attended his visit, we may mention, as no small one, the excitement produced by playing in a new world, before utter strangers. This gave new interest to existence; it broke through the



benumbing apathy of age and satiety; aroused the languid powers of a mind that seems always to have required some powerful stimulus to draw it forth; and thus revisited his heart with some of those delightful glows of ardour and ambition that accompany youthful efforts. To these may be added, if ever his imagination turned that way, the triumph of having planted his name and memory in a populous and enlightened country, where it will stand single and renowned at the head of the dramatic annals. Those who have seen Cooke will faithfully treasure up a recollection of his peculiar and wonderfully prominent merits, and his name will become consecrated by time, the same as Garrick's is in England; with this difference, that Garrick was a successor to other masterly performers—Cooke will ever be quoted, in this country, as the first great master of the art.

We have observed that we consider Mr. Cooke's visit as a promising omen. The emigration of so distinguished a performer, and his reception here, will naturally draw attention to this country. Indeed, we may recollect that Kemble was on the point of embarking when the present war broke out; and we had rumours of other eminent actors preparing to emigrate. If the effect merely ended here, and were confined to this individual art, it would be matter of congratulation, but we look to greater advantages. The elegant arts are all more or less linked together. The cultivation of one insensibly leads on to another, and wherever one gains entrance, the others are sure to follow. Artists will begin to look towards this country as a new field for reputation and profit. They will imbibe a higher opinion of our taste, manners, and habits of living; they will be induced to visit our shores, and thus rapidly contribute to the improvement of those polite arts and elegant enjoyments, which soften, refine, and ennoble the character of a nation.

We would not be understood to adopt the common cant about the theatre, as being the mirror of nature, the great school of morals and manners, and many other magnificent titles with which it has been the fashion to compliment it. We have long since ceased to expect any great benefit from the stage, either as to our refinement, or our orthodoxy. Whatever the stage might be rendered, under proper regulations, and whatever it may have

been, in the classic ages, when it was made a matter of national importance, it certainly is but of little utility in modern days. It is true, we have occasionally very sublime precepts inculcated; such as, that it is very wicked to kill a king, very dangerous to usurp an empire, and many other such gigantic crimes, that we, common folk, have very rarely an opportunity, and still more rarely a disposition, to perpetrate. Such are the excellent pieces of advice, ostentatiously held forth, by way of a sop to the old Cerberus virtue, who, by the by, has grown very infirm and weak in the eyes, in these latter days: and having paid this kind of toll, the moralists of the stage consider themselves at liberty to follow their own fancies, and be as licentious as they please.

There is no kind of mischief more dangerous than that which is done under the mask of morality. Open, avowed profligacy carries a caveat with it that puts us on our guard; a professedly immoral and obscene play would attract none but the vicious and the vulgar. But we have occasionally seen some worthy old citizen, with his motherly consort, and a hopeful progeny of grown-up daughters, listening with smug, contented countenances, to a tissue of villanous intrigues, and hideous debaucheries, enough to corrupt the principles and disease the imaginations of the whole family—but then the play had an excellent moral, and it is ten to one but the hero was either stabbed, or stabbed himself, in the fifth act, which plainly shows what vice must come to at last.

Or should the old gentleman bring his hopeful son and heir to the play, he is taught to despise parental authority as an intolerable restraint upon a lad of spirit, and is shown a thousand amusing modes of deceiving old hunks, or old squaretoes, or some other of those technical appellations which designate reverend old age. He is taught that libertinism of the most criminal kind, such as would poison the cup of domestic happiness, and impair the dearest bonds of society, is nothing but youthful spirit, and manly gallantry. Spendthrift profusion is represented to him as generosity; it is dazzling to behold in these brave plays how money flies about in every scene. There are no beings so generous as those who have nothing to give; and this may be the reason why play writers and play actors are so wonderfully munificent. We have beheld the bearer of a billetdoux rewarded with a handful



of gold; a gossiping chambermaid feed with a full purse, for betraying the secrets of a family; and now and then, when the occasion is a little extraordinary, we have absolutely seen the stage deluged with a shower of brass guineas.

And then as to the persons who represent these scenes of elegant life, who, of course, are to be considered models of fashion and gentility—they are too often “dire dogs,” whose ideas of elegance and ease have, peradventure, been acquired among the dirty beaux of the tavern, or the choice spirits of the porter-house. Or fine ladies who exhibit the maudlin elegance of low life; who mistake mawkish affectation for grace, and pertness for vivacity. To these observations there certainly are exceptions, but we speak of what is too generally the case in theatres.

But what shall we say of those plays that outrage modesty; those ribald and indecent scenes, at which virtue revolts, and modesty hangs its head. We have witnessed, and witnessed with burning indignation, some miserable vagabond of a buffoon, dwelling on obscene allusions, giving them tenfold grossness by his emphasis and manner, and seeming to triumph in the opportunity of insulting female delicacy with impunity. We have witnessed the brutal shouts and clamorous applause of the vulgar, whose enjoyment of each dirty joke seemed heightened by the blushes and confusion with which it covered every female countenance. We cannot but express our contempt for such grovelling ambition, that seeks to gratify the base minded at the expense of the virtuous. We cannot but express our abhorrence of such plays as are calculated to shock the modesty of our females—or, what is worse, to render them callous to indecency.

But these abuses will ever exist, so long as theatres are made the means of private emolument. They will always consult rather than reform the taste of the public. They will come down to the gross tastes and obtuse minds of the vulgar, and encourage and perpetuate the follies of the times. We are not speaking merely of our own theatres: we have seen in the history of the British stage how theatres have been made little better than brothels—how the haunts of vice and debauchery were diligently explored, to afford scenes for public entertainment, and how fine geniuses could forget what was due to their high endowments, could abuse

the divinity within them, and descend to be the panders of a depraved and licentious age. Splendid but disgraceful monuments of this prostitution of mind we behold in the plays of Congreve, Vanburgh, Farquhar and even DRYDEN; monuments which remind us of those sumptuous but profane piles, which were anciently erected to the infernal deities.

The present state of the stage in England is another proof how prone it is to degenerate in mercenary hands. We are indebted to that country for incessant philippics on our want of refinement; yet what right has a nation to lecture others on taste and elegance, whose principal theatres are transformed into mere bear-gardens—where nothing will satisfy the enlightened public, but melo-drames, pantomimes, elephants, swimming dogs, leaping horses, and other bestialities. We do not wonder that Cooke abandoned a stage, where, like poor Gulliver, he was eclipsed by those Houynhnm competitors; nor should we be surprised if Kemble were driven from his empire by the irruption of Timour and his Tartars.

We have therefore given up all expectations of great national benefit from the theatre; we consider it as a mere resort of amusement, to while away an idle hour, which might be spent more unprofitably; to vary the scene of common life, and to furnish something wherewithal to enliven our imaginations and refresh our minds amid the dusty cares of business. The most we ask from those who conduct it is, that they will endeavour to correct its abuses as much as their interests will permit; that it shall be as innocent as possible in its nature, and shall not leave us much worse than it found us.

The arrival of Cooke was an era in the American drama. Our stage had certainly been much improved by the excellent acting of Mr. Cooper, but we had now before us a model, and were furnished with an opportunity of studying the perfection of the art. Of the other arts that are objects of taste, and addressed to the imagination, we are enabled to judge, in this country, with facility. Their productions are transferrable, and may be transported from place to place, and preserved unimpaired for ages. But the masterpieces of acting are inseparable from the artist. Imitation can give but a meager and spiritless idea of them; description is still more inefficient. It was therefore but little to be expected,



by the lovers of the drama in this country, that they should be enabled to behold the achievements of a master ; nor indeed is it probable they would have had this gratification, had not the sudden passion for horse plays broken out among the English dellitanti, and made them rather negligent of the humbler merits of their two-legged performers.

The performances of Cooke have awakened a new taste in acting. The noble simplicity with which he played, at first surprised and almost disappointed the multitude. It requires delicacy of perception, and a certain cultivation of taste, to relish what is really admirable in art ; for its naked simplicity too commonly eludes the vulgar eye. We recollect a worthy countryman of ours, who, on first beholding the Apollo of Belvidere, was grievously disappointed to find, after all he had heard about it, that it was “ nothing but a naked man !”

Such was the case with many on the first appearance of Cooke. They expected, of course, to witness something striking and astonishing. Some robustious hero, who, like the redoubtable Bottom, should play in the “ true tyrant’s vein,” and roar “ until the Duke should cry encore.” Whereas, on the contrary, they beheld a man that neither stamped, nor started, nor slapped his breast, nor threw himself into attitudes ; one so devoid of stage mummary, so free from rant, so like the life, in a word, so *good*, that they were utterly at a loss what to think of it. If this were acting, it seemed as if every body could act, for it was but to get upon the stage and talk like other men.

It must be admitted, however, that even the groundlings quickly learnt to appreciate the true merits of his acting. It was gratifying to witness the thunders of applause that followed some of those sudden, masterly turns of expression, for which Cooke was remarkable—those simple, eloquent, but familiar movements, that took you unawares ; that thrilled through your whole frame ; that made you *feel* they were fine, before you had time to consult your judgment. These were exquisite, because so purely natural. It seemed as if Cooke had a short cut by which he arrived at his object almost without exertion, pouncing upon it with the velocity and unerring aim of the eagle. He possessed a command of feature, a wonderful mobility of the muscles of the face, that enabled

him to speak volumes with his looks. Expression played over his countenance like summer lightning, with quick and ever varying vivacity; and flashed from his eyes with a keenness that shed a blaze of light on the meaning of his author. This, aided by a peculiarly emphatic elocution, enabled him to throw so much poignant effect into a small compass, and to deal those master strokes of acting, that penetrated in an instant to the very souls of his auditors.

From the whole style of his acting, and from the opinion that can be formed from his biography, he seems to have been an actor more from genius than study. He had an innate aptitude for the art, and seemed to depend more upon the resources of his own mind, and his intuitive perception of what was correct and excellent, than to form himself, with cautious correctness, and all the precision of feeble mediocrity, on the technical rules of criticism. With the clear eye that ever accompanies a master, he had penetrated through the mists of error, and the perversions of false acting, and had contemplated the simple but grand elementary principles of the art. On these he formed himself, and laid the foundation of all his excellencies. His style and manner appear to have been his own; he copied no one servilely; it is true, he improved himself by the performances of other great actors, but it was only as one great painter improves by the productions of another. Finding out the principles on which they excelled, and adopting those principles and applying them to his own manner; copying them only, where they copied nature; or, rather, studying nature in their performances.

With all his excellence, however, Cooke was a very limited actor. He had the judgment to find out the particular line in which he excelled, and sufficient discretion to confine himself to it. He was deficient in any great elevation of mind, or sensibility of heart. Hence, he was little calculated for those characters that required heroic loftiness of carriage, or the dignity of deportment that springs from conscious virtue; neither could he depict, with any great success, the gentler passions and tender emotions, that produce the pathetic. It was in the harsher passions that he excelled. Hatred, malice, pride, arrogance, suspicion, revenge, he could represent with the most baleful accuracy. His delineations of chuckling, triumphant craft, and cold-blooded cruelty,



were horribly fine, and his despair was awful. In comedy, he excelled in strong satirical characters. He was irresistible in sarcasm, and the cutting leer of his eye seemed to glance to the very marrow of his opponent. All his humour had a strong dash of the sarcastic; even in Falstaff he often sacrificed the good-humoured waggery of the jolly knight to his love for biting sarcasm; and his Richard was remarkable for a vein of sneering humour, that heightened the malignancy of the character.

In every part that he performed, there was a tendency to familiarity of style. Like Hogarth in painting, he had little idea of beauty, nor any great elegance of imagination; but like him, he had a wonderful knowledge of common life, and of the human heart. A great shrewdness in seizing upon whatever was expressive and characteristic, and a happy facility in executing his conceptions. Such is the wonderful power of genius, that this self-abused, negligent, capricious being, with little study and still less care, could arrive at excellencies in his art, which many men of more mind, sounder critical judgment, and unwearied assiduity, may labour all their lives to attain. He was, in fact, an actor more calculated to furnish rules, than to consult them. He was a model, from whom rules might be drawn. But we would hint to our tyros in the art, whom we often see shaking their fingers, drumming with their truncheons on their thighs, and indulging in other little mimicries, which they fancy to be imitating Cooke, that it was the principles on which he excelled that they ought to have studied, and not his peculiarities; and that they might have meditated incessantly, and, provided their intellects would admit, with continual profit, on one of his masterpieces, as Michael Angelo is said to have meditated on the sublime torso of the Hercules.

We have suffered ourselves to talk so much about Cooke, that we had nearly forgotten the work that lays quietly before us, awaiting its doom, like a prisoner at the bar. This, in the plenitude of our power, we might despatch off hand, for much the same excellent reasons, that a learned judge once condemned a culprit to be hanged—first, because it is time for our dinner; and, secondly, because it is not dignified for a critic to sit in judgment, and no author be damned. But though we are all potent, yet are we merciful; and if we say but little concerning the work,

yet will we endeavour, as far as the nature of our office will admit, that that little shall be just. Indeed, we feel very considerable kindness to the author, for having given us an opportunity of talking. Literary attempts are so rare in this good money-making country, that we have seldom an opportunity to display our prowess; and feel as impatient, with quill in hand, and no work to assault, as does a valiant, new-commissioned officer, with a sword by his side, and no enemy to encounter.

The fault that chiefly strikes us, in this work, is the voluminous quantity of unimportant matter, extracted from Cooke's private common-place book. The details furnished therefrom are occasionally interesting, and present a more faithful picture of his character and mind than could be otherwise made. But they become monotonous, and are frequently trivial. A great part of them are brief chronicles of his daily occupations, wherein he minutes down, with curious fidelity, what time he rose, what time he breakfasted, read the newspaper, dined and went to bed; but particularly the latter; perhaps because he thought it a matter worthy of record that he went to bed sober, or, rather, that he went to bed at all.

It is curious to observe, in these private journals, which occasionally bear more the appearance of confessions, the sober comments that Cooke makes on his habits of intoxication. We have in particular, one severe philippic, which we shall extract both as a specimen of Cooke's turn of thinking, and as a curiosity in itself; being the self-upbraiding of an intemperate man, maturely considered, methodically arranged, and minuted down to stand in evidence against himself. It is not often, however, that he indulges in such severe self-flagellation; we are sorry to say, that in general, he seems to have castigated himself with as much tenderness as did the sage Sancho, when labouring to disenthral the hero of La Mancha.

"Having mentioned cards several times, as introduced at the mess, Mr. Cooke explains, by saying that there was no gambling; at the same time condemns himself for having wasted his time so fruitlessly: 'It will very little assist me in defending myself, to say that I have frequently wasted my time in a much worse manner. When a man reconciles himself to himself, by making degrees of sin, he is in the utmost danger of advancing to, instead of



receding from, the most abominable depravity. It is a doubt with me, whether a gamester, (here I take the word in its utmost latitude,) or drunkard, be the most vitious character, or the most dangerous to society. The former, without deranging his faculties, exerts them all for the avowed purpose of plundering every one he plays with; his dearest friends not excepted, (if such a wretch can have a friend,) and when, by superior villany, or some unforeseen chance, he is in his turn beggared, he is ready fitted for the most atrocious crimes, robbery, murder, or suicide. Drunkenness, in addition to the high degree of wickedness attached to it, has the melancholy and woful effect of degrading the human beneath the brute creation. What confidence can be placed in those persons who are in the habit of rendering themselves incapable of rational exertion? A crime committed in this state is aggravated by the state itself, and in this light both moral and religious law must view it. There have been many excellent arguments used against this beastly vice, and many exposures of its dreadful tendency, but none more strong, pointed and convincing, than the following short story, I believe an oriental one: A young man was decreed by fate to commit one heinous crime. He was to have the choice of three; but inevitably must choose. It was left to him to make his election, of parricide, incest, or drunkenness. He chose the last, got drunk, and committed the former two.’”

We shall only add that this sermon, in a manner preached to himself, fared the fate of most other sermons. No sooner could old Cooke escape from the admonitions of his own conscience, than they were speedily forgotten; and he fell to sinning with greater vehemence than ever; as if to reward himself for having been so marvellously sober and rational. Indeed, it seems as if he accompanied these confessions by a kind of absolution; and having wiped off the old score, stood ready to begin a new one.

We shall not enter into an analysis of his biography; it contains many well told anecdotes, whimsical, characteristic, and often disgusting; such, we apprehend, as occur in the history of most distinguished actors of vagabond propensities. But though they are often amusing in themselves, still it is pitiable to witness such prostration of intellect, such wilful abuse of genius, such absolute self-abandonment.

Amid all the anecdotes, however, of his low sensualities and joyless revels, there are two or three gleams of native benevolence of feeling, that are really touching. We allude, among

other instances, to old Cooke's deportment on reposing for an evening, at Amboy, in the rural retreat of Mr. Dunlap. There was something in the innocent cheerfulness, the domestic endearment of this family circle, that seemed to warm the blighted heart of this poor, homeless wanderer. He seemed to contrast this scene of tranquil happiness with his own vagabond life, and sighed for equal innocence and repose. This, and the circumstance of his liberality to a poor widow, who had sheltered him in her hovel, during one of his paroxysms of intemperance, show that Cooke possessed a heart, which, however desolated and worn out by debauchery, was not originally bad.

It was Cooke's great misfortune that his ruling propensity became notorious, and that he had no longer the apprehension of discovery to make him cautious in his excesses; he, therefore, gradually became familiar with disgrace, and regardless of public exposure. The good-humoured indulgence with which he was received by polite audiences, after repeatedly insulting them by drunken desertions from the theatre, or, what is worse, by drunken exhibitions, led him to magnify his own importance in the public eye. He seemed to think that there was a redeeming spirit in his performances that atoned for every fault; he grew arrogant upon indulgence, and it was amusing to notice the proud and lordly air he could assume, when he thought his dignity not sufficiently acknowledged. Poor Cooke should have recollected that there is such a thing as being beneath public resentment; we cannot indulge any great feelings of indignation against beings who are mere objects of amusement; and there are no personages who enjoy a greater latitude of privilege than those from whom no good is expected.

Independent of Cooke's habits of intemperance, we do not find that he was prone to any other habitual vices. It is true, he would occasionally romance, and dwell rather fondly on former adventures; particularly his military exploits in this country during our revolution; when he was within an ace of taking General Washington, and putting an end to the war "with his own hands." But this might seem a very trivial and common-place achievement, to the mind of a man, who, in the way of his profession, was continually in the practice of overthrowing empires.



It must be admitted also, that he was somewhat extravagant in the number of his wives; but the domestic establishments of actors, like those of sailors, are seldom rigorously scrutinized, and it is thought a pretty tolerable instance of fidelity if they have not more than one wife in every port. As to his intemperate excesses, nature had wisely provided against their bad effects, by implanting in his bosom a discreet and insurmountable antipathy to fighting; so that his revels, however noisy, were generally harmless. He now and then threw the furniture out of the window when drunk; but then he paid for it when sober: and he occasionally indulged in boisterous and abusive language, but if it were followed by blows, they were none but such as fell upon his own carcass. In a word, he appears to have been one of those unlucky beings, who are nobody's enemy but their own; and we close the amusing biography before us with a mingled, good-natured kind of feeling towards the hero; in which there is a great deal more of admiration than esteem, and considerably more of pity than contempt.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

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### ROENTGEN'S EXPEDITION TO AFRICA.

[The fate of the unfortunate Parke is now fully ascertained; who perished in an attempt to explore the interior of Africa. In the following article, from the Gentleman's Magazine; we have the melancholy end of an interesting young German who had undertaken the same perilous enterprise.]

*Mogadore, Oct. 15, 1812.*

MR. URBAN,

I REQUEST you will insert in your widely circulating Miscellany, the annexed particulars of Mr. Roentgen, whose friends must have been anxious for some authentic intelligence respecting him.

A. W. COURT.

Mr. Roentgen arrived at Mogadore in the spring of 1811, and in consequence of letters of recommendation from Sir Joseph Banks, Mr. Mitford, and Mr. J. G. Jackson, resided at my house.

I was not at home at his arrival, and but a very few hours during his stay in Mogadore, as I arrived home on the Friday noon, and he set off on his journey for the interior early the next morning.

Mr. Roentgen's first intention was, to have remained one year at Mogadore; but, making a journey to Morocco about two months after his arrival, from whence he wrote the note annexed, he soon after his return became extremely impatient to commence his very arduous undertaking.

The plan which had been recommended by me was, to engage some trader going to Tombuctoo to take him under his protection and bring him safe back for a stipulated sum; but this proposal carried with it too much the air of restraint.

I had had in my service for about a year prior to Mr. Roentgen's arrival, a man born at Beverly, in Yorkshire, of German parents. This fellow, when a seaman on board a British ship of war, which put into Tetuan or Tangier, ran away, and turned Moor; had been a renegade some years, and was in my employ as gardener. With this man Mr. Roentgen unfortunately contracted a very close intimacy; which originated, no doubt, from his talking the same language, and the fellow's parents being natives of the same part



of Germany as Mr. Roentgen. He therefore determined to take this renegade for his companion; and on my arrival at home I found them ready to set off.

I endeavoured to persuade Mr. Roentgen to put it off for a few days, as I did not like his trusting wholly to a renegade; but, he said, things were gone too far; the man was in possession of all his plans, and one day's delay might be fatal.

Mr. Roentgen was accompanied out, the first fifteen miles, by several Europeans, who returned in the evening. One remained the night with him, and the next day until they reached the River Tansif, where Mr. Roentgen sunk his European clothes in the river, and put on the Moorish dress; and he then pursued his journey, accompanied only by the renegade.

They were provided with two good mules, a variety of beads, and other articles of merchandise; about five hundred dollars in money, and each well armed with pistols, swords, muskets, and daggers. Mr. Roentgen was also well supplied with drugs to pass as a physician when it might be necessary in the interior. He carried with him also a very fine copy of the Alcoran on vellum, which might be of service to him in gaining the protection of some sheriff.

At parting, Mr. Roentgen promised we should hear of him by every opportunity, if only his name, date, and place, on a bit of paper. We, however, never heard from him.

When they had been gone about three weeks, it was reported here that the renegade and a Moor were seen passing the river at Azamore, a town to the northward of this; but, it appearing so improbable that *they* should have taken that route, no attention was paid to the report.

When Mr. Roentgen had been gone about seven weeks, accounts came from Morocco, that a Moor of the province of Shedma had been stopped offering for sale a watch and various other articles apparently belonging to a European; and the rumour immediately went forth, that they belonged to Mr. Roentgen, who had been murdered. The governor of this place sent for the articles from Morocco; and they were all identified as having been Mr. Roentgen's by my brother, and the watch, as one which he always wore suspended by a riband from his neck. There was now but too much reason to suppose this unfortunate traveller had been murdered, and that within three or four days' journey of this place; but still no one suspected the renegade. We sent to Morocco to have the examination of the Moor taken. He persisted in declaring that he found Mr. Roentgen dead, and in a very putrid state,

under a tree ; and that he took from his person the various articles which he had offered for sale.

About seven months ago, I received intelligence that the renegade had been seen at Arzilla, a town about 300 miles to the northward, where he was working as a gardener, and that he was going to Oran to embark for Europe. Upon sending to Arzilla, however, I could not find him, or ascertain to a certainty that he had been there.

A month afterwards, a Jew who came from Mequinez told me he saw him in that city, and spoke to him ; and that the renegade was very shy of speaking to him.

There is, I think, little doubt but Mr. Roentgen was murdered by the man in whom he placed his entire confidence ; and that man a European. The mules, the dollars, and the various articles with which the mules were loaded, were sufficient plunder, without taking the few articles from his person, which were of little value. It is probable, too, that although the wretch could murder his master when asleep, he might not have the courage to strip him afterwards. As Mr. Roentgen had taken uncommon pains to make himself fit for undertaking such a dangerous journey as to the interior of Africa, and as he was a young man of considerable talents, and of great perseverance of mind, it is very much to be lamented that he should have met with such an untimely end.

As a number of letters have been addressed to him at my house, the writers will have them returned, on signifying their wishes to that effect.

A. W. COURT.

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*Copy of a Letter from Mr. G. H. Roentgen to Mr. Court.*

*Morocco, 7th June, 1811.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM as happy as a man who loves liberty and nature—the only goods in life—will always be where he enjoys both. You will say that Morocco is a town, and that the idea of a town takes away both liberty and nature ; but then it is a town where there are more palm-trees than houses, more gardens than palaces ; and this mixture of animal and vegetable life pleases me beyond description.

It seems to me quite a sin to lose the precious time here with writing to you what I may tell you much better in a few days : therefore I think to have by these few lines fulfilled the duty which your friendship and goodness lays upon me,



by telling you that I am as well and happy as any mortal can be. Believe me your grateful friend, G. H. ROENTGEN.\*

\* The following article on the subject of Roentgen's intended expedition into the central regions of Africa, appeared in a German journal of the 8th of October.

"There has been lately published at Neuwied an interesting letter from the traveller Roentgen to his brother. It reached him through Professor Hagen, who received it from Mr. Nunemann, of London. Roentgen, it appears, after visiting Paris, Vienna, and London, had repaired to Mogadore, where he resided a considerable time; and the letter in question, dated the 21st of July, 1811, was written on the bank of the river Teusiff, at the moment of his departure for the interior of Africa. The following is some of the most interesting information it contains:

"During my residence at Mogadore, I was engaged day and night in studying the Arabic; and I have succeeded in making myself be understood by the natives of the country. I will avail myself of that knowledge of the country, and of the manners of the people, which I have acquired, in order to travel directly to Tombuctoo. I would not act with so much boldness, were I not convinced that Providence has destined me to make the discovery of the interior of Africa. My good stars have furnished me with a companion in my travels, than whom I could not have wished for a better. He is a German, who, when only twelve years old, quitted his paternal roof, having an irresistible inclination for roaming: he has never since lived six months on the same spot, and is now 38 years of age. He knows all the European languages—the Slavonic excepted. Fourteen years ago, when destitute of money or protection, he was impressed by the English for a sailor, in an island of the Mediterranean, where he happened to be. He was inhumanly treated by them, and reduced almost to despair. His ship anchored before Tetuan, for the purpose of watering; and there having struck an English officer who had used him ill, in order to avoid punishment he escaped, and became a Mussulman at Tetuan. Since then, he has traversed the Barbary States in all directions, and has lately returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca. He has lived at Jamba, in Africa, as a coffee-house keeper, and at Janoi as a physician. At Constantinople he has superintended the gardens of a Pacha. I got acquainted with him at a merchant's in Mogadore, who had hired him as a gardener. I have taken him into my service, and I treat him rather as a friend than as a domestic: the benefits which I shall derive from his experience are immense. About a month ago, I travelled with a caravan of merchants to Morocco, where I procured valuable information respecting the communications with the interior of Africa. It is impossible to convey an idea of the violent hatred which animates the Moors against Christians; even at Mogadore, I could hardly go abroad without being overwhelmed with insults. I was obliged, in order to view the city of Morocco, to get an escort of four soldiers, who, by orders of the government, were to keep back the populace. Even then I was often assailed by stones, one of which hit me so severe a blow on the forehead, that for some time I thought myself dangerously wounded. This hatred of the Moors arises in a great degree from our dress. I saw at Morocco preparations for the setting out of a caravan, which was to reach Tombuctoo by Taflet and Tunt. I immediately formed a resolution to join this caravan, and I returned to Mogadore. My companion was delighted with the plan, which I did not communicate to any one else but to one Christian. I caused it to be reported at Mogadore, that, disgusted with the bad treatment I had received at Morocco, I meant to repair to Tangier, and from thence embark for Gibraltar. This pretended project furnished me with a pretext for purchasing a mule, and every other necessary for my journey. I secretly procured some Moorish garments. Having finished my preparations, I invited some Christians at Mogadore to a party of pleasure on a mountain about six English miles off, whither they were often in the habit of going. I have there spent one day with them, and declared that I meant to proceed directly for Tangier. They will accompany me to a certain distance, and will give out at Mogadore that I am on my way to Tangier. As soon as I am left alone with my fellow traveller, I mean to clothe myself in my Moorish garb, and to enter the great road which leads from Taflet to Morocco. From thence I shall reach Deminit, a town situated at the foot of Mount Atlas, where I shall be safe from any searches which the Governor of Mogadore might make, should he learn that I have not gone to Tangier. At Deminit I shall join a caravan which will pass there about that time, and with it I shall cross Mount Atlas, covered with snow, and next enter the burning plains of Taflet. I shall remain at Taflet with a German rene-

## SEA MONSTERS.

[From the Monthly Magazine.]

*To the Chief Magistrate of Hull.*

SIR,

THE public attention, as you must be aware, has of late been considerably excited with regard to the existence of mermaids, by surprising and apparently well authenticated accounts of one or more having been seen about the Orkneys. But, as this comes from rather a suspicious quarter, and we here not having the gift of *second sight*, we give them but cautious admission. We, however, fell to turning over all our books on the subject; and, among a profusion of instances, we take the liberty of addressing you on one in the "*Telliamed*" of Monsieur Maillet, p. 238. edit. Lond. 1750, which (in case you might not possess the book) we here transcribe, that you may the more clearly see the reason of our intrusion.

"The fact I am now going to relate is of another kind, and much more singular. Towards the end of the last age, an English vessel belonging to Hull, when fishing for whales in the seas of Greenland, one hundred and fifty leagues from land, was surrounded, about noon, by sixty or eighty small boats, in each of which there was a man. The sailors had no sooner discovered them, than they put out their ship's boats, in order to come up with some of them: but the men in the small boats, which they conducted with two small oars, plunged all at once into the sea with their boats, and none of them appeared the whole day after, except one. This returned to the surface of the water a minute after, because, in plunging, one of the oars was broken. After four hours' chase, and a hundred new plunges, in proportion as the ship's boats approached, the little boat was at last taken, together with the man that was in her. He was brought on board the ship, where he lived twenty days without taking any nourishment, or uttering any cry or sound, which could make people suspect that he had the use of speech; but he sighed continually, and tears flowed from his eyes. He was shaped like us, with a beard and hair pretty

gado. There are in that city a number of Germans. There are some Germans in Morocco; and to one of them I am indebted for some valuable information. I expect to find a German in Tombuctoo, and there I mean to remain six months, making it the centre of my observations on the interior of Africa. I shall pass for a physician; I have laid in a supply of medicines, of which I know the application. It is my wish to penetrate towards the South, and to be able to reach Wesemb, or the Cape. Should I find this too difficult, I mean to return to Europe, to publish the journal of my travels; and shall again return to Africa, where I am destined to make some discoveries."



long, but from the middle downward, his body was all covered with scales. As for the boat, it was eight or nine feet long, and very narrow, especially at the two extremities. The ribs of it, and even the seat on which he sat, were fish-bones. It was covered, within and without, with skins of the sea-dog, (seal,) stitched to each other. This boat had in the middle an opening large enough to let the rower in, and the aperture was surrounded by a kind of sack, or purse, of the same skin, with which the man, introduced to the middle into the boat, girt himself so perfectly with bands, also made of the same skin, that the water could not enter into the boat. Before the man, were two pieces of the same skin fixed to the covering, where they formed two kinds of pouches. In one were found lines and hooks, also made of fish bones, and in the other some fish, which appeared to have been but lately taken. At the rower's sides were two small oars, also fixed to the boat by straps of the sea-dog's skin. All these curiosities, together with the man himself dried, are still to be seen in the Town-hall of Hull, and the account itself, attested by the captain and all the crew, is to be found in the archives of that place."

Now, Sir, you would considerably oblige us by writing, if these curiosities are still in your Town-hall; and describing them: or (should they not be there) if there is even any tradition among the old people of Hull concerning them.

JOHN F. M. DOVASTON.

*West-felton, near Shrewsbury,  
Feb. 1, 1812.*

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*To Mr. J. F. M. Dovaston.*

SIR,

You have my leave to print this letter. The Mayor (of Hull) placed your letter in my hands, and begged me to answer it. He finds no such account in their archives; but, what is more satisfactory, the following account I have transcribed for you upon an inscription painted upon the very Greenland or Eskimaux boat, which, with all its appurtenances, you so accurately and correctly describe. The only tradition of the *bonny boatman's* corpse (as our vulgar name him) is the following. When the large Trinity-house (whose revenue is from twenty thousand to thirty thousand a year) was rebuilt, some portions of his real and actual skeleton were found to remain in the above boat; but the fragments were dispersed and lost in the dust of a new erection, and in the removal of the building materials. An effigy of his body, made of painted

leather, yet remains. It is perched in the very identical boat in which the Eskimaux was forcibly conveyed to Hull by our corsairs, or slave makers, or curiosity dealers. Your description of his boat, oars, &c. and of his plunging and breaking the oar, is a true one; for one of his oars is actually broken! Diving, or plunging, is one of the usual practices of the modern Eskimaux. Captain Rose, who lately died in my parish, and who sailed many years to the Greenland seas, acquired, from the Danish settlers in Davis' straits, the easy trick. I saw a Danish sailor, once a resident with the Moravian mission, practise the same trick with this very Greenland boat (borrowed for the purpose from the Trinity-house.) It is performed by striking the water at a particular angle with both oars at the same time: it seemed to me as practicable as sculling or feathering the oar. The same Dane, intoxicated, was drowned on the river Humber, in a boat which he had made, of a form similar to the Eskimaux one. Maillet's description is correctly true in every point. The Eskimaux fleet might have been a fleet of sixty or eighty boats. Such migrations of whole tribes were seen by Hearne, in his "Tour to the North Sea," and by Mackenzie, in his voyage thither. Coxe's Russian Discoveries describe a similar boat as used in circumnavigating Siberia, and Polar America, now an easy task from the rivers Oby, Jenisei, and Kamschatka. Du Halde's China describes it in his chapter on the Tartars. Lately Phipps and Cooke, Perouse and Vancouver, give you prints and plans of boats exactly of the same form. Read your Maillet's description as you look at such prints. The Hull sailors and captains often buy Eskimaux boats. Harris's and Hacluit's older collection (in folio and 4to.) of voyages towards the North Pole, also describe, in a hundred places, similar boats. Maillet wildly and absurdly doubts the use of speech in the poor Eskimaux captive!

The Bible, now translated into their language, will answer and refute the insinuation. I have conversed with such savage converts, sailing to Hull with our fishers. The cry which he uttered would, of course, be the cry of alarm. In an Eskimaux, Moravian, Latin, and Danish (or quadrilinguist) Vocabulary, which I gave to the Bible Society, (London,) are many of their monosyllabic cries of joy and grief, &c. Like yourself, I often apply to strangers for similar and curious information; and, like yourself, I always receive polite, if not learned, answers. The nonsense concerning mermaids every anatomist will give up. The old voyagers are full of them; all *Musea* are full of fishes, in which the two upper side fins are so distorted as to resemble arms, and they are absurdly called by the



name of mermaid. The Icelandic sages are full of these tales. The Sanscrit poets describe "men of the sea." They have succeeded to Homer's Nereids and Tritons, and marine nymphs. Folly is eternal in our race: its forms change.

Feb. 21st, 1812.

R. PATRICK.

*Parsonage house, Sculoates, Hull.*

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*From the New-York Daily Advertiser.*

THE subject stated in the subsequent affidavit, having been doubted by many on its first publication, it was thought advisable to bring it forward as it now is, authenticated under the oaths of the three respectable gentlemen whose signatures are affixed to it.

*City of New-York, ss.*

On this 28th day of April, 1813, before me the undersigned notary public, personally came and appeared Samuel G. Bailey, late master of the ship Amsterdam Packet, W. R. Handy, late master of the ship Lydia, and Adam Knox, late master of the schooner Augusta, all belonging to New-York; and the said appearants being duly sworn according to law, severally and solemnly deposed and declared, that they were passengers on board the ship Niagara which arrived at this port from Lisbon on Saturday last: and that on the 8th day April inst. being in lat. 43 49. long. 65. at meridian saw a large lump on the horizon, bearing N. W. distance 6 or 8 miles ahead, which we supposed the hull of a large ship bottom up. When within gun shot of it, discovered that it had motion, and on a nearer approach found it to be a fish apparently 200 feet in length, about thirty feet broad, and from seventeen to eighteen feet high in the centre, was covered with a shell formed similar to the plank of a clinker built vessel—near the head on the right side was a large hole or archway, covered occasionally with a fin which was at times 8 or 10 feet out of the water—intended to have sent the boat to make further discoveries, but was deterred from the dreadful appearance of the monster, having approached within thirty yards of it.

W. R. HANDY.

ADAM KNOX.

SAM'L G. BAILEY.

Sworn before me, W. BLEECKER, *Notary Public.*

## THE PONTINE MARSHES.

It is announced, from the Continent, that the French have succeeded in draining the Pontine Marshes; a pestilential nuisance which has subsisted for so many centuries, in the vicinity of Rome, in defiance of every attempt of the ancient imperial, as well as of the papal government. This district, once so healthy and so populous, and at length again reclaimed, is said to afford a disposeable quantity of 150,000 acres of excellent land. The means adopted are not, nor perhaps can be, clearly stated in a short notice. That the engineers have improved the line, regulated the falls, enlarged the water ways, secured the embankments, sluices, and other works; and no doubt employed the powers of steam to facilitate their general and particular labours—may be concluded from the science and activity of a people, too long employed in the works of destruction. To works like the present every friend to humanity must join in wishing success and duration.

## COMPARATIVE STRENGTH OF THE DIFFERENT NAVAL POWERS.

[From the European Magazine.]

**BRITISH NAVAL FORCE.**—At sea, 79 ships of the line; nine from 50 to 44 guns—122 frigates—77 sloops and yachts—4 bombs, &c.—161 brigs—54 cutters—52 schooners, &c.—In port and fitting, 30 of the line—11 from 50 to 44 guns—29 frigates—18 sloops—4 bombs, &c.—86 brigs—6 cutters—11 schooners, &c.—Hospital ships, prison ships, &c. 28 of the line—2 from 50 to 44—2 frigates—1 yacht.—Ordinary and repairing for service, 77 of the line—10 from 50 to 44 guns—70 frigates—37 sloops—3 bombs—11 brigs—1 cutter—2 schooners.—Building, 29 of the line—4 from 50 to 44 guns—12 frigates—5 sloops, &c.—3 brigs.—Making a grand total of 1545 vessels.

**RUSSIAN NAVY.**—53 sail of the line—34 frigates—59 cutters, brigs, &c.—smaller vessels, 226, carrying in all 4,428 pieces of cannon.—In this estimate are included ships of every class and condition, from a first-rate to a gun-brig; those that are building, under repair, and laid up in ordinary as unserviceable, as well as those that are in commission, and fit for immediate service.

**SWEDISH NAVY.**—The Swedish fleet consists of 12 sail of the line, eight frigates, besides cutters, gun-boats, &c. and there are two ships of the line and three frigates building.



**PORTUGUESE NAVY.**—The Portuguese have eight sail of the line, three frigates, and four sloops, at the Brazils.—At Lisbon there are some ships of war, but they are chiefly unfit for service.

**DANISH NAVY.**—The present naval force of Denmark consists of four ships of the line, two frigates, and about 120 gun-boats. There are two ships of the line and three frigates on the stocks. Their maritime operations are chiefly carried on by flotillas of gun-brigs, which carry heavy metal, are well manned, manœuvred, and fought; and, in a calm, are formidable even to ships of war.

**UNITED STATES NAVY.**—The republican navy, at present, consists of the following frigates:—*Constitution*, 44, Captain Hull; *United States*, 44, Captain Decatur; *President*, 44, Commodore Rogers; *Chesapeake*, 36; *New-York*, 36; *Constellation*, 36, Captain Bainbridge; *Congress*, 36, Captain Smith; *Boston*, 32; *Essex*, 32, Captain Porter; *Macedonian*, (late British,) 38; the *John Adams* corvette; *Hornet* sloop, of 16 guns; *Syren*, *Argus*, and *Oneida* brigs, of 16 guns; *Vixen*, *Enterprise*, and *Viper* schooners, of 12 guns; 170 gun-boats, stationed at New Orleans; and the *Vengeance*, *Ætna*, *Vesuvius*, and *Spitfire* bombs.

**FRENCH NAVY.**—In the various ports of France, Holland, and Italy, the French have 65 sail of the line, and 61 frigates, ready for sea; and 32 sail of the line, and 26 frigates, building and fitting out; so that in a short time we shall have opposed to us, under French colours, a numerical force of 97 sail of the line, and 87 frigates: but even the ships which are pretended to be ready for a start, particularly those in the Scheldt, are very badly manned; an evil for which the enemy does not possess any practicable remedy.

18th January, 1813.

**DRURY-LANE, JAN. 23.**—A new Tragedy, from the pen of Mr. COLERIDGE, was performed under the title of "*REMORSE*."

The scene is laid in Spain: and the events of the play are supposed to have taken place in the reign of Philip II. shortly after the close of the civil wars against the Moors, and during the heat of the persecution which raged against them.

The language of this play is poetic and impassioned: the incidents are sufficient to keep the attention alive during the representation; and some of the situations are strikingly calculated for dramatic effect. The characters of the two brothers are well drawn and finely contrasted. That of *Teresa* does not rise much above mediocrity; but the concep-

tion of the part of the Moorish woman is full of poetic imagination; and the opening scenes in particular are sublime and interesting. The moral is perfect, and strict poetical justice is done on the guilty. The style is, throughout, poetical and classical, and far above the common level. It abounds with fine touches of nature, and the tender feelings are almost incessantly appealed to. Many of the passages were received with loud, general, and prolonged applause. The tragedy was, indeed, heard from beginning to end with the most marked distinction, and announced for repetition amid shouts from every corner of the theatre.

Its principal faults were too great length; and an exuberance of passages merely descriptive.

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#### DANCE OF DEATHS.

THE French historians relate, that in the year 1424, the English Regent gave at Paris a show, or spectacle, after the manner of his country. The scene of this entertainment was the churchyard of the Innocents. Persons of both sexes, splendidly dressed, and representing the different conditions of human life, began to execute various dances. A number of figures personating Death, whose limbs were concealed in tight dark clothes, upon which were sowed the resemblance of dry bones, so that they seemed to be walking skeletons, came and mingled in the dance, and led away now one and now another into the chambers and cellars about, where refreshments were provided. This odd allegory was called *La Danse Macabrée*.

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#### SNAIL-EATING.

THEY are eaten in Germany, boiled, fried in butter, and sometimes stuffed with forced meat. The *sliminess* is considered as the greatest delicacy, and therefore remains after dressing. Snails close the list of *maigre* dishes, but they are not eaten from economy, seven of them being charged at the *Traiteur's*, the same as a plate of veal, or beef.

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#### SCOTCH SALUTATION.

THE North Briton at Auld Reeky, frequently greets his friend with "Weel, Donald, is na this a *fine* cauld rainy morning?" Indeed it is, Sandy, a *fine* cauld rainy morning.



## POETRY.

[We have just received a poem entitled "THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN, OR THE VALE OF ST. JOHN," a lover's tale. It is written in the romantic, or minstrel style, such as Walter Scott has revived. The author is said, we know not with what truth, to be William Erskine, Esq. to whom an introduction of one of the Cantos in Marmion is addressed. The story is more appertaining to chivalry than those of Walter Scott; it is spirited and fanciful, and will, we think, prove very popular among the admirers of this species of poetry. The following is an extract.]

### KING ARTHUR'S ADVENTURE.

BENEATH the castle's gloomy pride,  
In ample round did Arthur ride  
Three times; nor living thing he spied,  
Nor heard a living sound,  
Save that, awakening from her dream,  
The owlet now began to scream,  
In concert with the rushing stream,  
That washed the battled mound.  
He lighted from his goodly steed,  
And he left him to graze on bank and mead;  
And slowly he climbed the narrow way,  
That reached the entrance grim and gray,  
And he stood the outward arch below,  
And his bugle-horn prepar'd to blow,  
In summons blithe and bold,  
Deeming to rouse from iron sleep  
The guardian of this dismal keep,  
Which well he guess'd the hold  
Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,  
Or pagan of gigantic limb,  
The tyrant of the wold.

### XV.

The ivory bugle's golden tip  
Twice touched the monarch's manly lip,  
And twice his hand withdrew.  
Think not but Arthur's heart was good!  
His shield was cross'd by the blessed rood,  
Had a pagan host before him stood,  
He had charged them through and through;  
Yet the silence of that ancient place  
Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space  
Ere yet his horn he blew.  
But, instant as its larum rung,  
The castle-gate was open flung,  
Portcullis rose with crashing groan  
Full harshly up its groove of stone,

The balance beams obeyed the blast,  
 And down the trembling drawbridge cast.  
 The vaulted arch before him lay,  
 With nought to bar the gloomy way,  
 And onward Arthur paced, with hand  
 On Caliburn's resistless brand.

## XVI.

An hundred torches, flashing bright,  
 Dispelled at once the gloomy night  
     That loured along the walls,  
 And showed the king's astonished sight  
     The inmates of the halls.  
 Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,  
 Nor giant huge of form and limb,  
     Nor heathen knight, was there ;  
 But the cressets, which odours flung aloft,  
 Showed, by their yellow light and soft,  
     A band of damsels fair!  
 Onward they came, like summer wave  
     That dances to the shore ;  
 An hundred voices welcome gave,  
     And welcome o'er and o'er!  
 An hundred lovely hands assail  
 The bucklers of the monarch's mail,  
 And busy laboured to unhasp  
 Rivet of steel and iron clasp ;  
 One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,  
 And one flung odours on his hair ;  
 His short curled ringlets one smooth'd down,  
 One wreathed them with a myrtle crown.  
 A bride upon her wedding day  
 Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.

## XVII.

Loud laughed they all—the king, in vain,  
 With questions tasked the giddy train ;  
 Let him entreat, or crave, or call,  
 'Twas one reply—loud laughed they all.  
 Then o'er him mimic chains they fling,  
 Framed of the fairest flowers of spring.  
 While some their gentle force unite,  
 Onward to drag the wondering knight,  
 Some, bolder, urge his pace with blows,  
 Dealt with the lily or the rose.  
 Behind him were in triumph borne  
 The warlike arms he late had worn.  
 Four of the train combined to rear  
 The terrors of Tintadgel's spear ;  
 Two, laughing at their lack of strength,  
 Dragg'd Caliburn\* in cumbrous length ;

\* King Arthur's sword.



One, while she aped a martial stride,  
Placed on her brows the helmet's pride,  
Then scream'd, 'twixt laughter and surprise,  
To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.  
With revel-shout, and triumph-song,  
Thus gayly marched the giddy throng.

## XVIII.

Through many a gallery and a hall  
They led, I ween, their royal thrall.  
At length, beneath a fair arcade,  
Their march and song at once they staid.  
The eldest maiden of the band,  
    (The lovely maid was scarce eighteen,)  
Raised, with imposing air, her hand,  
And reverend silence did command,  
    On entrance of their Queen,  
And they were mute.—But as a glance  
They steal on Arthur's countenance  
    Bewildered with surprise,  
Their smothered mirth again 'gan speak,  
In archly dimpled chin and cheek,  
    And laughter-lighted eyes.

## XIX.

The attributes of these high days  
Now only live in minstrel lays;  
For Nature, now exhausted, still  
Was then profuse of good and ill.  
Strength was gigantic, valour high,  
And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky  
And beauty had such matchless beam,  
As lights not now a lover's dream.  
Yet e'en in that romantic age,  
    Ne'er were such charms by mortals seen,  
As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,  
When forth on that enchanted stage  
With glittering train of maid and page,  
    Advanced the castle's Queen.  
While up the hall she slowly passed,  
Her dark eye on the king she cast,  
    That flash'd expression strong;  
The longer dwelt that lingering look,  
Her cheek the livelier colour took,  
And scarce the shame-faced king could brook  
    The gaze that lasted long.  
A sage, who had that look espied,  
Where kindling passion strove with pride,  
    Had whispered "Prince, beware!  
From the chafed tiger rend the prey,  
Rush on the lion when at bay,  
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,  
    But shun that lovely snare."

## XX.

At once, that inward strife suppress'd,  
 The dame approached her warlike guest,  
 With greeting in that fair degree,  
 Where female pride and courtesy  
 Are blended with such passing art  
 As awes at once and charms the heart.  
 A courtly welcome first she gave,  
 Then of his goodness 'gan to crave  
     Construction fair and true  
 Of her light maidens' idle mirth,  
 Who drew from lonely glens their birth,  
 Nor knew to pay to stranger worth  
     And dignity their due ;  
 And then she pray'd that he would rest  
 That night her castle's honoured guest.  
 The monarch meetly thanks express'd,  
 The banquet rose at her behest,  
 With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,  
     Apace the evening flew.

## XXI.

The lady sate the monarch by,  
 Now in her turn abashed and shy,  
 And with indifference seemed to hear  
 The toys he whispered in her ear.  
 Her bearing modest was and fair,  
 Yet shadows of constraint were there,  
 That show'd an over-cautious care  
     Some inward thought to hide ;  
 Oft did she pause in full reply,  
 And oft cast down her large dark eye,  
 Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh,  
     That heaved her bosom's pride.  
 Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know  
 How hot the mid-day sun shall glow  
     From the mist of morning sky ;  
 And so the wily monarch guess'd,  
 That this assumed restraint express'd  
 More ardent passions in the breast,  
     Than ventured to the eye.  
 Closer he press'd, while beakers rang,  
 While maidens laughed and minstrels sang,  
     Still closer to her ear—  
 But why pursue the common tale ?  
 Or wherefore show how knights prevail,  
     When ladies dare to hear ?  
 Or wherefore trace, from what slight cause  
 Its source one tyrant passion draws,  
     Till mastering all within ?  
 Where lives the man that has not tried,  
 How mirth can into folly glide,  
     And folly into sin !



## SCIENTIFIC INTELLIGENCE.

### FREEZING OF ALCOHOL.

Mr. Hutton, of Edinburgh, has read to the institute of that city a notice respecting some experiments on the freezing of alcohol, which requires a degree of cold that had never before been produced by any means, and which is stated by him as 116 degrees below zero of Fahrenheit. The fluid was frozen into a perfectly solid mass, composed of 3 strata, the uppermost of a yellowish green, the second of a pale yellow colour, and the third, which greatly exceeded the rest in quantity, and was the pure alcohol, nearly transparent, and colourless. It was proved that the alcohol was not decomposed in the process, but merely separated from two foreign substances which it had held in solution; these are highly volatile, and cannot be separated but by freezing; to them the alcohol owes its peculiar flavour. Mr. Hutton has not made public the method of producing such a degree of artificial cold, but he has stated his sanguine hopes that it will be sufficient to congeal the gases which are at present considered as permanently elastic.

We are informed that Sir H. Davy is now making a series of successful experiments on fluoric acid, (a hitherto undecomposed substance,) the result of which will confirm his doctrine respecting chlorine, the oxymuriatic gas of the French school of chymistry. This gas, Sir H. Davy holds to be a simple, and distinct acidifying substance, while the French school maintain it to be a peculiar compound of oxygen.

### MARINE TRANSIT.

Mr. Wm. Chavasse, a lieutenant in the British East-India Company's Madras establishment, has invented an instrument, which he calls the Marine Transit, for ascertaining the longitude at sea. The principle is this: that equal quantities of mercury will pass through a given aperture in equal times, if the same height of column, reckoned from the discharging aperture, can be uniformly maintained, provided that changes of temperature have no effect on the result; or if they have, that the quantity of the deviation may be estimated, and added or subtracted as the case may require.

### SAWING CAST IRON WITH A CARPENTER'S SAW.

M. Dufaud, in a letter to M. d'Arcet, director of the iron works at Montalair, published in the eighty-second volume of *Ann. de Chim.* announces that he has succeeded in sawing cast iron with a carpenter's saw, and that all that is necessary to insure its being sawed as easily and in the same space of time as dry wood, is that the iron be heated to a cherry red. For heating the iron a furnace is preferable to a forge fire, as the temperature is thus rendered more uniform throughout the mass. The iron should be so placed as to have a firm bearing everywhere, except where the saw is to pass, to prevent any part from being torn off by the saw; and the iron should be cut briskly, using the whole length of the saw, the teeth of which should be set fine. By this simple method not only plates but mill-gudgeons, and even anvils, have been cut with great facility. When the piece to be cut is large, two saws should be employed, for the convenience of using and cooling them alternately: the saws receive little or no injury. This useful process, though not generally known, is not new; several years ago M. Pictet observed a workman saw a hot cast iron pipe in the workshop of Mr. Paul of Geneva.

On Saturday the 20th of February, this useful process was tried in the presence of several gentlemen, at the iron-foundry of Mr. Williams, in Waterford, and the success of the experiment was complete. The operation was repeated several times, and always with facility. The iron, as stated above, should be heated to a cherry red, and the saw need only be selected according to the fineness of the pieces into which the metal is to be cut. The operation is perfectly easy, and the saw remains uninjured.

## THE TRITON.

Didot, the famous French printer, lately published "A memoir on the properties of a new diving-machine called a *Triton*," by which a person may, 1. Remain in the water as long as he pleases; 2. He may descend into the water to as great a depth as the column of water displaced by his bulk permits; 3. He may use his arms, legs and body at pleasure; he may walk or labour with ease, at that depth to which he has descended; 4. He runs no hazard; he may give notice when he thinks proper to those who, on the surface, attend his operations; 5. He is not enclosed in the machine, which is but small, and does not prevent his entering into fissures, or narrow clefts; 6. The sea being often dark, as Halley informs us, he may carry a lantern down with him to the depths of the sea, to enlighten the sub-marine grottoes, or the holds of vessels, into which he may have penetrated; 7. The machine is not costly. The principal novelty in this machine is the adoption of artificial lungs, by which the difficulty hitherto found of breathing in the sea is remedied.

## HUMBOLDT'S VOYAGE.

M. DE HUMBOLDT has just completed the astronomical part of his celebrated voyage. His last number consists principally of the preliminary Dissertation, which explains all the means he had taken for making his observations, and which means he has employed with such remarkable advantage. There is another Discourse, by M. Oltmanns, in which he states all the modes of calculation which he adopted, in order to derive from the observations of M. Humboldt, and astronomers in general, the most accurate and important results. For this Discourse M. Oltmanns was awarded the Lalande Medal, by the French Institute.

## LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

[From late London publications.]

An edition of Livy, in four volumes 8vo. is printing under the direction of a gentleman of the University of Oxford, from the text of Drakenborch, with the various readings, and the whole of the notes of Crevier's editions.

The Moniteur has announced a new work, the Foreign Mercury; to contain pieces in prose and verse, with copious extracts from the Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Russ, Swedish, Dutch, English, Arabic, Persian, Greek, and all the oriental languages.

M. Pigault Lebrun has a new romance in the press, entitled A Picture of Society.

In the press, a translation of the unedited Letters of Voltaire, addressed to the Countess of Sutzelbourg. The original is said to possess the genius of the author, the magic of his style, and his satirical touches.

A third volume of the Calamities of Authors will shortly be published.

The Rev. Doctor Bidlake is engaged on a poem, entitled The Year, which is nearly ready for publication.

A new work has been announced, to be continued annually, entitled Historical Sketches of Politics and Public Men for the Year 1812. The following are the subjects proposed to be discussed; 1. General view of the Character of the Different Parties. The Ministerial Party; The Opposition Party; The Popular Party. 2. Ministerial and Party Changes during the Year. 3. The Foreign Policy of Great Britain. 4. Bonaparte and the French Empire. 5. The Campaign in the Peninsula. 6. Russian Politics and Campaign in the North. 7. America, and the Orders in Council. 8. Ireland, and the Catholic Question. 9. The East-India Company. 10. Finances. 11. The Question of Peace. 12. Observations on some Public Institutions.

Mr. Montgomery's new poem of the World before the Flood, is now printing by the Ballantynes, of Edinburgh.

AUG 5 - 1916

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



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